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ABSTRACT

Fourth in a series of six dealing with African culture and intended for secondary level students, this book deals with the major effects of European colonialism on African life as seen by Africans. All of the selections in this volume were written by Africans and come from a variety of sources including autobiographies, novels, poems, newspaper articles, and historical documents. The basic purpose of the book is to capture some of the feelings, aspirations, and experiences of black Africans and, by so doing, help the reader develop a sense of empathy and a feeling of identity with human beings everywhere, recognizing the common humanity that all men share. Discussion questions are provided for the selections. The selections in this volume examine the social, political, economic, and cultural conflicts that resulted from foreign control. The period under consideration runs from approximately 1885 to the end of World War II. The reading selections are varied. Some examples follow. The first selection tells how one African chief reacted to seeing a white man for the first time. In two selections, Henry Stanley, the famous American journalist and explorer, explains how he was welcomed by Africans while exploring the Congo River in the early 1870's and then the African chief Mojimba, who led the welcoming party for Stanley, describes how he perceived the encounter. Chief Kabongo of the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya describes what happened to his people when the Europeans took control of Kikuyu land in another selection. (Author/RM)

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The Colonial Experience: An Inside View

LEON E. CLARK

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Unit IV of THROUGH AFRICAN EYES: CULTURES IN CHANGE

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When the whites came to our country, we had the land and they had the Bible; now we have the Bible and they have the land

—African saying

Preface and Acknowledgments

Through African Eyes attempts to get "inside Africa" by going directly to the Africans themselves. Almost all of the selections in this volume were written by Africans, and they come from a variety of sources: autobiographies, novels, poems, newspaper articles, and historical documents.

Unlike traditional textbooks, *Through African Eyes* does not try to "cover" all of Africa or to offer "expert" analysis by outside observers. Instead, it focuses on a few major themes and presents material that re-creates, as authentically and concretely as possible, the reality of African life. Interpretation is left to the reader. In effect, *Through African* Eyes has two major goals: to let Africans speak for themselves, and to let students think for themselves.

This unit deals with the major effects of European colonialism on African life as seen by Africans. Specifically, it examines the social, political, economic, and cultural conflicts that resulted from foreign control. The period under consideration runs from approximately 1885 to the end of World War II.

In some ways, Africa may seem different from the West, and indeed it is. But in many more ways, Africans as people

are similar to people anywhere in the world. Human beings, after all, no matter where they live, face the same basic needs: to eat, to work, to love, to play, and to get along with their fellow men. Learning how Africans manage their lives —sharing in their thoughts and theories, their emotions and dreams—should do more than provide a few insights into another continent or another culture. It should also help to lay bare the nature of the human condition. Perhaps the greatest justification for studying about other people is to learn about ourselves. If *Through African Eyes* helps further this goal of self-knowledge and in the process reveals some of the uniqueness and the universality of African life, then it will serve its purpose.

* * *

Through African Eyes is the result of three years' work. It represents the first major product of the Educational Materials Project (EMPathy), a non-profit educational organization located in New York City. EMPathy was founded in June, 1967, for the express purpose of developing curricular materials for the study of other cultures in American schools and colleges.

The one man most responsible for the existence of EMPathy and hence for the development of the material represented by this book is Ward Morehouse, Director of the Center for International Programs and Comparative Studies, New York State Education Department. His unwavering support of the project has been a constant source of both personal and professional inspiration. His colleagues Dr. Arthur Osteen and Norman Abramowitz have been equally helpful in keeping EMPathy alive.

Special thanks should go to Margaret Morgan for her

research contributions; to Janet Zobel for locating photographs; to the Conference on World Affairs for administrative support; and to Mrs. Gladys Topkis, of Praeger Publishers, Inc., for her sufferance.

The editor, of course, bears the ultimate responsibility for the selection of material, the over-all conception of the unit, and the connective writing in the text.

LEON E. CLARK

The Colonial Experience

Introduction

For more than one hundred years—from the mid-1800's to 1950—Europeans dominated the world. Their conquering flags flew in almost every corner of the globe—from the Belgian Congo to the Dutch West Indies, from French Indo-China to Portuguese Guinea, from the British West Indies to India and Burma. It was said, and with justification, that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." The same could have been said of the dominions of other European powers.

Since the end of World War II, however, the sun has gradually set on the colonial period. Today most of the lands that were formerly controlled by European powers are independent. But the lingering effects of colonialism can be seen everywhere in the so-called developing world. College students in India attend lectures in English; poets in Senegal write in French; judges in Kenya wear British-style wigs; businessmen in Indonesia maintain close ties with Holland.

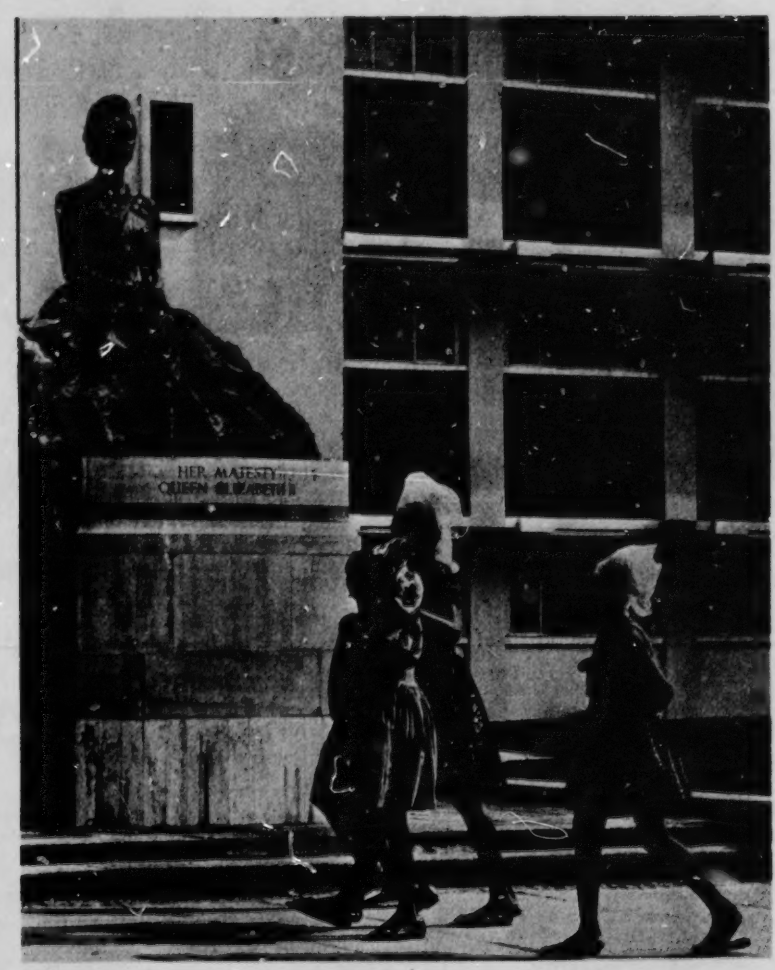
Generally, it was the educated élite in the former colonies who were most affected by the European influence, but the common man felt the impact too. The introduction of Western medicine, technology, government, and religion touched the lives of almost everyone to some degree.

To understand fully the impact of Western culture on the average African is extremely difficult for us; how, after all, can we *experience* the effect our culture has on other people? But if we ever hope to understand the rest of the world, we have to learn to see ourselves from the point of view of others. Two thirds of the people in the world live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These same people—who will comprise 80 per cent of the world's population in 30 years—have gone through a Westernizing process, often under the pressure of colonial control. If we don't look at this process from the inside—through the eyes of those who were affected—we will never understand the majority of mankind.

This unit attempts to present an insider's view of the colonial experience in Africa. In a sense, what it says applies to the colonial experience of people everywhere in the world. The Western colonizers—whether they were French, English, Portuguese or Belgian—brought a *foreign* culture with them wherever they went. And the colonized people everywhere reacted in similar ways: they detested the indignities of subjugation, but at the same time they saw the advantages of adopting Western technology. Today, too, the developing world bitterly resents the intrusion of the West, and at the same time avidly seeks the benefits of Westernization.

THE AFRICAN COLONIES

Colonialism came late to Africa, considering how long Europeans had been in contact with Africa. From approximately 1450 to 1800, European traders simply held posts along the African coast; so long as goods and slaves were brought to the coast by African traders, there was no need



A bronze statue of Queen Elizabeth stands as a relic of British colonialism in front of the Parliament House in Lagos, Nigeria. The young girls passing by probably do not remember the colonial past, but their education may be deeply affected by British influence.

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for the white man to penetrate the unknown interior. Even the stories of the riches of the continent brought back by explorers, who mapped most of Africa after 1850, were not enough to entice the Europeans into colonial expansion.

However, a series of events within Europe finally led to the "scramble for Africa." First, King Leopold of Belgium, eager to increase his wealth and prestige, sent the American explorer Henry Stanley to the Congo to make treaty arrangements with local chiefs. Stanley was so successful that by 1884 Leopold could claim an area in the center of Africa that equalled the size of all Western Europe.

Second, Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the German Empire, made a similar thrust into the continent. His agents, in only 18 months between 1883 and 1885, were able to carve out territories in Tanganyika (now Tanzania), South West Africa, Togoland, and the Cameroon. Unlike Leopold, however, Bismarck was not so much interested in wealth as in politics. He hoped that his move would draw other European powers into Africa, create competition between England and France (Germany's enemy), and thus improve Germany's position at home.

The other European powers did become alarmed by the Belgian and German moves; they feared that these nations would use their African territories as pawns in the power struggle in Europe. None of them, of course, wanted to be left out, so the rush for African colonies was on.

A conference was called in Berlin in 1884-85 to lay down the rules of the game (no slave trading, no interference in the territories of other European powers, etc.), and by 1900 the competition was virtually over: almost all of Africa had been sliced up and parcelled out by European powers. Only two states escaped colonization: Ethiopia and Liberia.

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The scramble for Africa, then, was mostly the result of internal European politics. But once the colonies were established, other factors, such as economics, became increasingly important. With the development of industry in the nineteenth century, European factories needed more and more raw materials. And with the end of the slave trade, Europe looked more and more to Africa to supply these materials. Africa was rich in palm oil, cotton, cocoa, rubber, diamonds, gold, and other minerals. The surest and cheapest way for Europe to get these materials was to control the land that produced them and the people who worked the land. The result was colonialism.

Another factor in the growth of colonialism had nothing to do with money. It concerned the minds and hearts (and souls) of people. For centuries Christian missionaries had been active in Africa, particularly during the antislavery movement of the early nineteenth century. When the European colonies were established, the missionaries saw an even greater opportunity to spread the word of God. They established churches, schools, and hospitals, and as a result became an important part of the colonial apparatus. From their own point of view, however, the missionaries were bearers of civilization, bringing the light of truth to the "dark continent." Many Europeans shared this view; in fact, they felt it was the "white man's burden" to bring the "benefits" of European culture to the "backward" peoples of the world. As Rudyard Kipling, the English poet, wrote in 1899:

> Take up the White Man's burden—
> Send forth the best ye breed—
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' need;

7

1884

To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

The Africans, of course, had a different view of themselves. But they were confronted with the presence of the Europeans,

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1900-1910

subjugated to a new political authority, a new economic system, and a new culture and religion. How did they react? How were they affected? What was it like to be an African living under European control? This unit attempts to answer these questions—and to raise other questions.

*"Too White, Like a Devil"**

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: There were many adjustments that Africans had to make under colonial rule, but the first and most obvious one was to the physical appearance of the colonialists. Although Africa and Europe had had trade relations for more than four centuries, very few Africans had ever seen a white man before the beginning of the colonial era.

This selection tells how one African chief reacted to seeing a white man for the first time. The encounter took place around 1890 in what is now Ghana. Bear in mind that white skin is a sign of illness in Africa, and that evil spirits are often depicted as white.

The author of the work from which this reading is adopted, C. C. Reindorf, was the son of an African mother and an European father. He worked as a Christian minister in Ghana and wrote one of the first accounts of traditional West African history, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, published in 1895.

As you read the selection, think of this question:

How is the king's reaction to the European similar to the reactions of some Europeans to Africans?]

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* Adapted from C. C. Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1895, pp. 117-20.

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King Firempong had charge of Christiansborg, a Danish trading center. All the trade with the Danish merchants was placed in his hands. But he had never seen a white man. In fact he used to hear from traders that Europeans were a kind of sea-creature.

He therefore expressed his desire to see a European, and Mr. Nicolas Kamp, a bookkeeper, was ordered to go to Da, the capital of the Kotokus, to be seen by King Firempong. A grand meeting was held for his reception. In saluting the assembly, Mr. Kamp approached the king and took off his hat; when Mr. Kamp was bowing to salute him, Firempong thought he was an animal who would jump upon him. The king fell down flat from his stool and cried loudly for his wives to assist him.

The drummer and the government interpreter did their best to convince the poor king that Mr. Kamp was a human being and that his movements were the mode of Europeans in paying their respect to superiors. The king got up from the ground and sat on the stool, and ordered his wives to sit between him and the European. By this he could cool down his fears.

Upon seeing the cue—a tail-like twist of hair—down the back of Mr. Kamp (as people were then in the habit of wearing, as the Chinese do nowadays), he said, "Dear me, all animals have their tails at the extremity of the trunk, but Europeans have theirs at the back of their heads!" The interpreters explained to him that it was no tail but twisted hairs. All this while, the king's wives were watching every movement of Mr. Kamp to know whether he was a man or an animal. Not being satisfied yet with all he had seen, the king requested Mr. Kamp to take off his clothes, which he

declined to do, saying he would do that only at home, when no lady was present.

The meeting retired and Mr. Kamp went to his quarters, where a table was prepared for him. During the meal, the king's wives stood by peeping at him. Some said, "He eats like a man, really he is a human being!" Finally, Mr. Kamp took off his clothes before old Firempong, who now could touch him. "Ah, you are really a human being, but only too white, like a devil!"

That Was No Welcome and "That Was No Brother"

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: When different cultures meet for the first time, misunderstandings are bound to develop. What members of one culture see in a particular act members of another culture may not see at all. A friendly gesture in one culture may turn out to be a hostile gesture in another. Such misunderstandings were common in the early contacts between Europeans and Africans and, indeed, persisted throughout the colonial period.

The next two selections illustrate this point by describing the same event from two perspectives. In the first selection, Henry Stanley, the famous American journalist and explorer, explains how he was "welcomed" by Africans while exploring the Congo River in the early 1870's, with several canoe loads of African companions. Stanley was the first white man to trace the entire course of the Congo.

In the second selection, the African chief Mojimba, who led the welcoming party for Stanley, describes how he perceived the encounter. He told his story some years later to a Catholic missionary, Father Joseph Fraessle, who supports Mojimba's claim that such a welcome was friendly and the usual way of greeting strangers.

As you read these selections, think of these questions:

Whose view was right, Stanley's or Mojimba's?

What was Stanley's general attitude toward Africans?

How did this attitude affect his perceptions?]

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THAT WAS NO WELCOME*

About 8 A.M. we came in view of a marketplace, near which there were scores of small canoes. The men at once rushed into them and advanced all round us. We refrained a long time, but finally, as they became emboldened by our stillness and began to launch their wooden spears, which they proceeded to do all together as soon as somebody cried out *"Mutti"* (sticks), we were obliged to reply to them with a few shots, which compelled them to scamper away ahead of us. Drums then awakened the whole country, and horns blew deafening blasts. Some canoes boldly followed us.

We came, about 10 A.M., to another market green. Here, too, warriors were ready, and again we had recourse to our weapons. The little canoes with loud threats disappeared quickly down river: the land warriors rushed away into the woods. We did not wish to hurry, because the faster we proceeded the quicker we found we were involved in trouble. We therefore loitered indifferently: rest was so rare that it became precious when we obtained it.

At 2 P.M. we emerged out of the shelter of the deeply wooded banks and came into a vast stream, nearly 2,000 yards across at the mouth. As soon as we entered its waters, we saw a great fleet of canoes hovering about in the middle of the stream. The canoe men, standing up, gave a loud shout when they saw us and blew their horns louder than ever. We pulled briskly on to gain the right bank when, looking upstream, we saw a sight that sent the blood tingling through every nerve and fiber of our bodies: a flotilla of

* Adapted from Henry M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, New York: Harper & Bros., Vol. II, 1885, pp. 268-73.

gigantic canoes bearing down upon us, which both in size and numbers greatly exceeded anything we had seen hitherto!

This engraving, done in 1878, depicts the battle between Henry Stanley and Chief Mojimba on the Congo River in the early 1870's.

Instead of aiming for the right bank, we formed a line and kept straight downriver, the boat taking position behind. Yet after a moment's reflection, as I noted the numbers of the savages, the daring manner of the pursuit, and the apparent desire of our canoes to abandon the steady compact line, I gave the order to drop anchor. Four of our canoes made believe not to listen, until I chased them to return to the line, which was formed of eleven double canoes, anchored ten yards apart. The boat moved up to the front and took position 50 yards above them. The shields were next lifted by the noncombatants, men, women and children in the bows,

and along the outer lines, as well as astern, and from behind these the muskets and rifles were aimed.

We had sufficient time to take a view of the mighty force bearing down on us and to count the number of the war vessels. There were 54 of them! A monster canoe led the way, with two rows of upstanding paddles, 40 men on a side, their bodies bending and swaying in unison as with a swelling barbarous chorus they drove her down toward us.

In the bow, standing on what appeared to be a platform, were ten prime young warriors, their heads gay with red feathers: at the stern, eight men with long paddles, whose tops were decorated with ivory balls, guided the monster vessel; and dancing up and down from stem to stern were ten men, who appeared to be chiefs.

The crashing sound of large drums, a hundred blasts from ivory horns, and a thrilling chant from 2,000 human throats did not tend to soothe our nerves or to increase our confidence. However, it was "neck or nothing." We had no time to pray or to take sentimental looks at the savage world, or even to breathe a sad farewell to it. So many other things had to be done speedily and well.

As the foremost canoe came rushing down, its consorts on either side beating the water into foam and raising their jets of water with their sharp prows, I turned to take a last look at our people and said to them:

"Boys, be firm as iron; wait until you see the first spear, and then take good aim. Don't fire all at once. Keep aiming until you are sure of your man. Don't think of running away, for only your guns can save you."

The monster canoe aimed straight for my boat, as though it would run us down; but when within fifty yards off, it

swerved aside and, when nearly opposite, the warriors above the manned prow let fly their spears and on either side there was a noise of rushing bodies. But every sound was soon lost in the ripping, crackling musketry. For five minutes we were so absorbed in firing that we took no note of anything else; but at the end of that time we were made aware that the enemy was reforming about 200 yards above us.

Our blood was up now. It was a murderous world, and we felt for the first time that we hated the filthy, vulturous ghouls who inhabited it. We therefore lifted our anchors and pursued them upstream along the right bank until, rounding a point, we saw their villages. We made straight for the banks and continued the fight in the village streets with those who had landed, hunting them out into the woods, and there only sounded the retreat, having returned the daring cannibals the compliment of a visit.

"THAT WAS NO BROTHER"*

When we heard that the man with the white flesh was journeying down the Lualaba (Lualaba-Congo) we were open-mouthed with astonishment. We stood still. All night long the drums announced the strange news—a man with white flesh! That man, we said to ourselves, has a white skin. He must have got that from the river-kingdom. He will be

* Remarks of King Mojimba, as told to Father Joseph Fraessle, reprinted here from Heinrich Schiffers, *The Quest for Africa,* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957, pp. 196-97. Copyright © 1957 by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Reproduced by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons and the Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd.

one of our brothers who were drowned in the river. All life comes from the water, and in the water he has found life. Now he is coming back to us, he is coming home. . . .

We will prepare a feast, I ordered, we will go to meet our brother and escort him into the village with rejoicing! We donned our ceremonial garb. We assembled the great canoes. We listened for the gong which would announce our brother's presence on the Lualaba. Presently the cry was heard: He is approaching the Lohali! Now he enters the river! Halloh! We swept forward, my canoe leading, the others following, with songs of joy and with dancing, to meet the first white man our eyes had beheld, and to do him honor.

But as we drew near his canoes there were loud reports, bang! bang! and fire-staves spat bits of iron at us. We were paralyzed with fright; our mouths hung wide open and we could not shut them. Things such as we had never seen, never heard of, never dreamed of—they were the work of evil spirits! Several of my men plunged into the water. . . . What for? Did they fly to safety? No—for others fell down also, in the canoes. Some screamed dreadfully, others were silent—they were dead, and blood flowed from little holes in their bodies. "War! that is war!" I yelled. "Go back!" The canoes sped back to our village with all the strength our spirits could impart to our arms.

That was no brother! That was the worst enemy our country had ever seen.

And still those bangs went on; the long staves spat fire, flying pieces of iron whistled around us, fell into the water with a hissing sound, and our brothers continued to fall. We fled into our village—they came after us. We fled into the forest and flung ourselves on the ground. When we returned that evening our eyes beheld fearful things: our

This Yoruba wood carving from Nigeria suggests how Africans see the white colonialist—determined, armed, and big-nosed.

brothers, dead, bleeding, our village plundered and burned, and the water full of dead bodies.

The robbers and murderers had disappeared.

Now tell me: has the white man dealt fairly by us? Oh, do not speak to me of him! You call us wicked men, but you white men are much more wicked! You think because you have guns you can take away our land and our possessions. You have sickness in your heads, for that is not justice.

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*King Ja Ja, Business Whiz**

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Colonialism is usually given credit for bringing modern technological culture to Africa. It is true, of course, that the Europeans built modern schools and hospitals, introduced scientific techniques of agriculture and industry, improved communications and transportation, and in general infused modern Western culture into traditional societies. But is it true that Africa needed colonialism in order to get these things?

A number of scholars today would say no. They argue that Africa would have modernized anyway through normal trade contacts with Europe, which had gone on for centuries. In fact, these scholars argue, Africa would have developed faster without colonialism because it would have developed naturally, and with its own interests in mind. As it turned out, under colonialism, Africa modernized according to European plans, which seldom put the interests of Africa first.

For example, all the top decision-making positions in colonial Africa were held by Europeans; hence Africans did not develop administrative skills. The entire colonial educa-

* Adapted from C. N. de Cardi, as reprinted in Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies*, London, 1899, Appendix I, pp. 526-29, 541-45.

tional system was designed to produce a supply of clerks and other low-level helpers, not leaders. At the same time, the economics of African colonies was geared to serve European interests, not to give African states a well-balanced income. If, for example, Ghana could grow cocoa, or Tanzania sisal, then that is what these countries grew, nothing else. They were forced to have one-crop economies that could collapse overnight if other countries began to grow the same crop and the total production was more than the world could buy. At the same time, industry was not developed in Africa because the colonial powers wanted to maintain their monopoly in industry, using Africa simply as a source of raw materials and a market for European manufactured goods. The real profits from the raw materials of Africa, then, went into European pockets. As a result, an African middle class—the businessmen in the economy—never had a chance to emerge.

The selection that follows illustrates this last point. King Ja Ja was a trader from Bonny, an area of contemporary Nigeria just east of Benin, where trade with Europe had existed since the sixteenth century. For three hundred years before that, slaves had been the major export of the region, but with the abolition of slavery and the development of Western industry in the nineteenth century, palm oil became the most important item of trade. Quite literally, palm oil greased the machines of Europe.

In 1861 the head of the Annie Pepple clan, Elolly Pepple, died, leaving his kin in great debt; he owed the British no less than 1,500 barrels of oil. Consequently, no one wanted to assume the leadership of the clan. Finally Ja Ja was elected, at the age of 42, because he was such an excellent businessman. The Ibos still regard him as one of the greatest men the tribe has produced.

The following selection is adapted from the writings of C. N. de Cardi, a European trader who knew West Africa well during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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As you read it, think of these questions:

What would have happened to Ja Ja if colonization had not taken place?

What evidence is there to indicate that Ja Ja's case was not the exception but the rule?]

Ja Ja had not been head of the Annie Pepple House for many months before he began to show the old chiefs what kind of metal he was made of. During the first twelve months he had selected from among the late Elolly's slaves no fewer than eighteen or twenty young men who had already accumulated a little wealth and whom he thought capable of being trusted to trade on their own. He therefore bought canoes for them, took them to the European traders, and got the Europeans to loan goods to each of these young men. Ja Ja himself stood as guarantor for them.

This operation had the effect of making Ja Ja popular among all classes of the slaves of the late chief. At the same time, the slaves of the old chief of the House began to see that there was a man at the head of the House who would set a good example to their immediate masters, hoping that perhaps their own masters would also trust them. Some of the young men Ja Ja sponsored are now wealthy chiefs in Opobo.

Two years after Ja Ja was placed at the head of the House, the late Elolly's debts were all paid off. Ja Ja saw to it that all the white traders received their payments by the date he had promised. Because of the prompt manner in which Ja Ja had paid up, he received, from each ship which the late chief

had dealt with, a present varying from 5 to 10 per cent of the amount paid.

From this date, Ja Ja never looked back. He became the most popular chief in Bonny among the white men and the idol of his own people. However, he was looked upon with jealousy by the Manilla Pepple House. [This jealousy finally led to a vicious war between the rival Houses of the Annie Pepple and the Manilla Peppie, made even more brutal by the supply of British arms. Ja Ja quickly realized that his fortunes did not lie in Bonny and in 1870 moved a few miles inland and established his own state, called Opobo.]

Opobo became, under King Ja Ja's firm rule, one of the largest exporting centers of palm oil in the delta. For years, King Ja Ja enjoyed popularity among the white traders who visited his river. But the time came when the price of palm oil fell to such a low figure in England that the European firms in Opobo could not make both ends meet. They therefore told King Ja Ja that they were going to lower the price they paid him for palm oil in the river. He replied by ignoring these traders and shipping large quantities of his oil directly to England, permitting his people to sell only a small portion of their produce to the white men stationed on the river.

Ja Ja found, however, that sending his oil to England was not quite so profitable as he could wish. He found that it took too much time to get his returns back from England (at least three months), whereas when he sold in the river he could get three to four times the returns during the same period.

In the meantime, however, the English on the river joined forces and agreed to divide all the produce coming down the river equally among themselves, thereby eliminating

competition among the white men. Ja Ja tried several different schemes in order to break up this new monopoly of the white men. At last he hit upon the bright idea of offering the whole of the river's trade to one English trading house.

He hoped that by making an agreement with one rich English house he would be able to restore competition between the white men and thereby make more profit. His bait took with one of the European traders who could not resist the golden vision of the profitable yellow grease (palm oil); Ja Ja had very cleverly convinced him that all the rewards from the hundreds of canoes filled with oil would be his if he would only agree.

A bargain was struck between Ja Ja and the trader, and so one fine morning all the other white traders woke up to find that their monopoly was at an end. They found out through their usual methods. Palm-oil traders would never be caught without a pair of binoculars and a tripod telescope to closely observe their opponent's doings. And one morning, while they were taking their usual "spy" around the river, they saw a fleet of over a hundred canoes around their "friend's" wharf. From that time onward, for nearly two years, this separatist trader scooped all the trade.

The fat was now in the fire, and the other traders boldly sent a notice to Ja Ja that they intended to go to his markets. Ja Ja replied that he held a treaty, signed in 1873 by Mr. Charles Livingstone, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul. This treaty empowered him to stop any white traders from establishing trading posts anywhere above Hippopotamus Creek, and allowed him to stop and hold any vessel for a fine of 100 barrels of oil.

In the meantime, clouds had been gathering around the head of King Ja Ja. His wonderful success had kept him from

recognizing that he was, in the eyes of the English government, merely a petty African king. He did not allow himself to see that times were changing in the Oil Rivers and that his rights were limited by the new English order. He did not realize, therefore, that when he signed the new protectorate treaty of December 19, 1884, the sixth clause was crossed out. As a result, the new treaty did not allow him to keep white men from proceeding to his markets as the Treaty of 1873 had.

Unaware of this, Ja Ja got himself into a series of disputes with the white traders. This led to his removal from the Opobo River in September 1887, by her Britannic Majesty's new Consul, Mr. H. H. Johnston. Ja Ja was taken to Accra, where he was tried before Admiral Sir Hunt Grubbe, who condemned him to five years' deportation to the West Indies, making him an allowance of about 800 pounds per year.

Poor Ja Ja did not live to return to his country and his people whom he loved so well and whose conditions he had done so much to improve.

The Coming of the Pink Cheeks *

PART I

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: In the last selection, we saw how the European control of trade prevented Africans from developing their own middle class. Businessmen like Ja Ja never had a chance to express their talents. As a result, Africans became dependent upon Europeans; they were more hindered than helped by the so-called material benefits of colonialism.

Even more serious than the Europeans' control of African trade, however, was their control of the land. Most Africans make their living from the soil. More important, they consider land to be a "sacred" part of nature and a traditional part of the tribe. Land is not a commodity that can be bought and sold; it is a gift from God that belongs to everybody, like the air we breathe.

After many generations—and sometimes after many centuries—a tribe becomes identified with a particular area. The land is their "property," belonging not only to the living members but also to the ancestors who worked the land in the past and to the unborn children who will work the

* Chief Kabongo, as told to Richard St. Barbé Baker; reprinted from Richard St. Barbé Baker, *Kabongo*, London: George Ronald, 1955, 107-26. Reprinted by permission of A. S. Barnes & Co. and George Ronald.

land in the future. When the Europeans came and "bought" land, many misunderstandings developed, for the Africans never meant to "sell" what in their eyes could not be sold.

In the following selection, Chief Kabongo, of the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya, describes what happened to his people when the Europeans took control of Kikuyu land. In his lifetime —from the 1870's to the 1950's—Chief Kabongo saw the sharp changes that took place after the coming of the white man.

As you read Part I of "The Coming of the Pink Cheeks," think of this question:

In what ways did the Europeans disrupt the Kikuyu way of life?]

For some years my eldest son had been going to a school kept by some Pink Cheeks only two hours' journey away. These were not the White Fathers, to whom my brother had gone, but were quite different. They wore clothes like the Pink Cheeks who farmed, and many of them were women. They had a medicine house where there were many ill people; there were good medicine-men and good things were done and sick people were made well. Every day my son would go before the sun was high and would come back before the sun set. Then he would eat and fall asleep, too tired to sit around the fire and be told the stories and history of our people or hear of the work that had been done or learn the customs and ways of our people and their laws and conduct. . . .

It was in these days that a Pink Cheek man came one day to our Council. He came from far, from where many of these

people lived in houses made of stone and where they held their own Council.

He sat in our midst and he told us of the king of the Pink Cheeks, who was a great king and lived in a land over the seas.

Like colonialism itself, this white officer travels on the backs of Africans.

"This great king is now your king," he said. "And this land is all his land, though he has said you may live on it as you are his people and he is as your father and you are as his sons."

This was strange news. For this land was ours. We had bought our land with cattle in the presence of the Elders and had taken the oath and it was our own. We had no king, we elected our Councils and they made our laws. A strange king could not be our king and our land was our own. We had had no battle, no one had fought us to take away our land as, in the past, had sometimes been. This land we had had from

our fathers and our fathers' fathers, who had bought it. How then could it belong to this king?

With patience, our leading Elder tried to tell this to the Pink Cheek and he listened. But at the end he said, "This we know. But in spite of this, what I have told you is a fact. You have now a king—a good and great king who loves his people, and you are among his people. In the town called Nairobi is a council or government that acts for the king. And his laws are your laws.". . .

For many moons this thing was much talked of by us. Then, when no more Pink Cheeks came and things went on as they had always been, we spoke no more.

Sometimes we heard of strange happenings, or even saw them ourselves, but for the most part life was still as it had always been. The Iron Snake, which I had never seen, had come and had carried men on it, not of our people; then a big path was made through the country half a day from our land. It was wide enough for three elephants to walk abreast. And stones were laid on it and beaten flat, so that grain could have been threshed there.

As the years passed and more and more strange things happened, it seemed to me that this path or road was a symbol of all changes. It was along this road now that came news from other parts; and along it came the new box-on-wheels that made men travel many days' journey in one day and that brought things for the market that the women wanted to have, clothes or beads to wear and pots for cooking. Along this road the young men went when they left to work with the Pink Cheeks and along it too they went when that day came that they traveled to fight in the war over the sea that the Pink Cheeks made against each other.

It was along this road that many did not come back and

some came with no legs, or who could not see. Two of my sons went and only one came back, and he brought only one hand and many strange new ideas and tales. Along the road, too, went the trees that men cut down when they made more and more farms. Without trees to give shade the ground was hot and dry and food grew not well.

By the time that my father, Kimani, died and his spirit joined those of our ancestors, our own land was poor too. For even though many of our family had gone away to work for the Pink Cheeks, our numbers had increased and there was now no room for the land to rest and it was tired. The food it grew was poor and there was not enough grown on it for all to eat. Those of our family who worked for the Pink Cheeks sent us food and coins that we could buy food with, for else we could not live.

Little by little, too, the rains fell less. When I was a boy I remember the rains came in plenty twice every year, the little rains and the big rains, and on the hottest days there would be heavy dews, for the trees kept the land cool.

Now it was different; now the little rains had gone and the big rains had become little rains. The big rivers had become little ones and dried up in the hottest time, and I saw this was not good.

Now that my father, Kimani, was dead, I had been chosen Muramati of our *mbari*. I was also now a Ceremonial Elder, a member of the Sacrificial Council.

It seemed to me that Ngai was tired of us. He sent so little rain. We must ask him to look upon us again and must sacrifice a ewe to please him.

I spoke of this one evening, and the Elders said it was good to make sacrifice, for the time of rain had long passed. So the day was fixed and I was chosen to be the leader.

Little Kabongo, my eldest grandson, who bore my name according to our custom, sat with us; he spoke then as do the young age group today before their elders, but which when we were young we did not.

"This is good," he said. "For three weeks the Pastor at the Mission School has prayed for rain."

"Which will send rain, do you think, the God of the Pink Cheeks or Ngai?" asked a small boy.

"Neither," announced a young man, son of one of my brothers, who was a schoolteacher. "I have read in books that it is the trees that make the rains come. Now that the trees are cut down there is no rain. In the Sacred Grove on the hills there is rain."

The small boy was listening, full of wonder.

"And who makes the trees grow? Surely that is God," said my grandson. "For the Pastor says that God made everything, that God is greater than Ngai."

Such discussions among the young were frequent, and to hear them made me sad. For this new learning seemed to pull this way and that way so that no one knew what was right.

But all this talk did not make more food nor bring us rain.

As there was now so little land and we were so many, the boys as they became men would go away, some to work on farms for the Pink Cheeks, some to a new kind of school-farm for men, where they learned the new customs and also some curious ways; for these grown men were made to play games like little boys, running after balls which they threw. This they did instead of good work.

Munene, one of my younger brothers, had been one of these. He had been away a long time, and when he came back he wore clothes like a Pink Cheek and he came with

one of them, in a box-on-wheels, which is called motor-car, along the new road.

The Pink Cheek called a Council together and when all, both Elders and the young men, were assembled and sat round, he spoke. He spoke of Munene; he told us of his learning and of his knowledge of the customs of the Pink Cheeks and of his cleverness at organizing.

"Because of this," he said, "and because he is a wise man, the Government, the Council of Muthungu that meets in Nairobi, have honored him and, in honoring him, are honoring you all."

He paused and looked around at us. Beside him Munene stood smiling.

"He has been appointed Chief of this district and he will be your mouth and our mouth. He will tell us the things that you want to say and he will tell you the things that we want to say to you. He has learned our language and our laws and he will help you to understand and keep them."

We Elders looked at each other. Was this the end of everything that we had known and worked for? What magic had this son of my father made that he who was not yet an Elder should be made leader over us all who were so much older and wiser in the ways of our people? It was as if a thunderbolt had fallen among us.

The Coming of the Pink Cheeks

PART II

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: When the Europeans took control of the land, they struck a blow at the traditional sources of authority and leadership. How could Kabongo, for example, lead his people when he did not control the land that fed them? How could he ask them to follow traditional ways when the Europeans could offer greater rewards for following new ways?

Leadership and authority in any society depend upon the ability to meet the needs of the people. A leader will maintain his authority only as long as he can reward his followers. Even a dictator who rules by force must be able to reward the army that serves him.

As you read Part II of "The Coming of the Pink Cheeks," think of these questions:

How did Kabongo attempt to regain his authority?

What did the Kikuyu gain under the Europeans?

What did they lose?]

The Pink Cheeks went on.

"Your new Chief will collect the tax on huts, and choose the places for the new schools that you will build everywhere, so that your children may be taught to read and write. He will raise the money for that from you all. I have spoken.". . .

When the Pink Cheek had gone there was much talk. We asked Munene to tell us how this had come about and why he was set above the Elders in this way.

"It is because they do not understand our laws and Councils," he told us. "Because I speak their language and because when I went away in their wars I had many medals."

The medals we knew about, for we had seen them. Many had them.

We spoke then of the tax on huts. It was heavy, for some men had many huts. Those men who had gone to work on the farms of the Pink Cheeks sent us money, but this we needed to buy food. More men, therefore, must go.

Munene gave us some good advice. He told that men were wanted in Nairobi to build the new houses made of stone, both for the Pink Cheeks to live in and where they sat to make business and trading. Our men could go there and earn coins and then they could come back when they had plenty.

This was good, for in this way we would pay our tax and no man would be taken by the Pink Cheeks for not paying. So our young men went away down the new road, we were left to grow what food we could, and all was as usual. . . .

It was while these men were still away to make money for our hut tax that ten of our people came back from the farms where they worked. They were not needed, they said, there was no work for them there. With many others, they had been sent back without money and without food, because there were bad people who troubled the land.

The colonialists took control of local African economies and shaped them to serve their own purposes.

This was the beginning. Along the new road had come big boxes-on-wheels that they called lorries [trucks], in which they had carted logs from the forest. Now these came filled with people. Many had no homes, for their land had gone to the Pink Cheeks. Some had no homes because their land had gone to be mined for gold. We could not let them starve, so we took them on our land. . . .

It was the end of the dry season and there was little food left in the storehouses. Our *mbari* had now grown big, and all these newcomers on our land must eat too. Altogether there were 1,200 people on the 200 acres of land my grandfather's father had bought. There was not enough room to grow all the food.

In the dry season many goats and cattle had died for want

of water. The harvest had been thin and there was little left, and there was no money to buy food; the last had gone for our hut tax. I heard the crying of children and I saw the women weaken in their work. The old men would sit near their huts, too feeble to walk.

Wangari, whose once-strong breasts hung like empty bags and whose eyes were deep in her head, came to me where I sat by my hut.

"Kabongo, son of Kimani," she said, sitting close, "we women are tired; there is no food and the children are hungry; the young men have no stomachs and the old men are withering as dry leaves. You yourself are weak or before this you would have taken counsel with the Elders. Speak now, for our people wait to hear your word."

I was roused. What she said was true. This was no time to sit and wait. We must hold Council.

The Council met again under the Mugomo tree. There were few, for the new laws of the Pink Cheeks had forbidden big meetings. I looked round at my friends and was sad. Their faces were anxious and their skin was loose on their bones. Even Muonji, who always used to joke, had no smile. For each one had been hungry for many days, and each one told the same story. Everywhere there was a shortage of food, for there was no land and all the time people were being sent back from distant parts. There was uneasiness and some of our tribesmen were troubling our people too much because they wanted to drive the Pink Cheeks from our country. This the Elders told in Council and were uneasy, for we wanted no war with the Pink Cheeks; we only wanted land to grow food.

"We must ask the Council of the Pink Cheeks to lend us some of the land we had lent to them," said one who came

from a place where there was land held by the government for future farms and not yet in use.

All agreed that this would be good and for Munene, who as Chief was our spokesman, we made a message to give to the Governor. What we told to Munene he made marks with and, when we had finished, he spoke it to us again and it was good. . . .

Munene took our message and he took also a gift of honey and eggs and went away down the long road and left us to wait.

We waited many days, with hope. It was a whole moon before Munene came back. He came to us slowly and sadly, and we knew from his way that the news was bad.

"They will not give the land," he said. "They say they have no more land for us."

And he told us many things that were not good; he told us of rebellions of some of our people, bad men who took our laws and ceremonies and degraded them; of the Pink Cheek warriors and of some he called Police who did unjust things to our people, who took good men and loyal to the Queen away from their work, and after much useless talk, sent them too to live on this land where there is no food.

So I am sitting before my hut and I wait. For soon the time will come for me to creep away into the forest to die. Day by day my people grow thinner and weaker and the children are hungry; and who am I, an old man, to eat the food that would come to them?

As I sit I ponder often on the ancient prophesy of Mogo wa Kebiro. Has the Pink Cheek brought good to my people? Are the new ways he has shown us better than our own ways?

Something has taken away the meaning of our lives; it has

taken the full days, the good work in the sunshine, the dancing and the song; it has taken away laughter and the joy of living; the kinship and the love within a family; above all, it has taken from us the wise way of our living in which our lives from birth to death were dedicated to Ngai, supreme of all, and which, with our system of age groups and our Councils, insured for all our people a life of responsibility and goodness. Something has taken away our belief in our Ngai and in the goodness of men. And there is not enough land on which to feed.

These good things of the days when we were happy and strong have been taken, and now we have many laws and many clothes and men dispute among themselves and have no love. There is discontent and argument and violence and hate, and .. vying with each other for power, and men seem to care more for disputes about ideas than for the fullness of life where all work and live for all.

The young men are learning new ways, the children make marks which they call writing, but they forget their own language and customs, they know not the laws of their people, and they do not pray to Ngai. They ride fast in motorcars, they work fire-sticks that kill, they make music from a box. But they have no land and no food and they have lost laughter.

The Hut Tax War *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: The Europeans ruled by force in Africa. Their most powerful political weapon was the rifle. But, as we saw in the last reading, they also gained and maintained control by undermining the old order. By taking over the land, running the schools, and offering jobs in the new colonial government, the Europeans were able to usurp the political power formerly held by the African chiefs. If the white man controlled the means of success, if he had the ability to give or withhold rewards, then he also had the power to exact compliance from the people.

Once the Europeans established a colony, they began to exert their political power by demanding taxes from the people. The most common form of taxation, instituted in almost all of the European colonies in Africa, was the hut tax, the price Africans had to pay for living in their own houses. Besides helping to support the new government, this tax made sure that labor was available for the colony's needs: building railroads, building European homes, working on plantations, and generally serving the needs of the white man. The tax forced Africans to take these jobs because there was no other way to earn money to pay the tax. It also forced the workers to migrate to places where work

* Adapted from *The Chalmers Report*, Part II, Parliamentary Papers, London, 1899, Vol. 60, pp. 302, 316-17.

was available—that is, needed. In short, the hut tax made the Africans the servants of the Europeans.

As can be imagined, the hut tax was not popular, and it often led to conflict. In 1888, in the British colony of Sierra Leone, it led to war. The strong-arm tactics of the tax collectors aroused the people and the "war boys" went on a rampage, killing not only many Europeans but also those of their fellow Africans who paid the tax, particularly the Creoles. The Creoles were English-speaking Africans living on the coast in the capitol of Freetown. They identified very closely with the English. It was natural, then, for the upcountry Africans to blame them as well as the English for the hut tax.

The following selection contains the testimony of two Creole women who survived the war. They gave their report to Sir David Chalmers, a British commissioner sent to investigate the situation.

What were the causes of the war?

What other issues were there, besides the hut tax?]

EVIDENCE OF MRS. TAYLOR

My name is Nancy Violette Taylor. I am a Sierra Leonean. We lived at Bolian on the Mapelle River, Kassi Lake. The policemen's treatment gave rise to this war. When they were sent to collect the tax, they used to ill-use the natives and took their wives. The policemen went to Kabomp and met a man with his wife and daughter. They beat the man and assaulted the wife and daughter, and threatened his daughter with a knife if she cried out. In the town where we were, Captain Carr spent three days. The police caught all the fowls in the town.

Q. *Did nobody complain to Captain Carr?*

All the people ran away while Captain Carr was there,

till he had left. Captain Carr asked for the Head Chief. He said he would burn the town if the headman did not come. Mr. Smith brought the man to the town, and he promised to pay the tax in a week's time. The next day a messenger, Williams, came to say he must pay in three days' time. He asked Mr. Schlenker to lend him the money.

We were afterwards caught by the war-boys, and I was with them for six weeks. On 29th April a sudden attack was made on Bolian. We went away in a boat, my husband, myself, a constable, and several others. In less than half an hour we got to a town, and over 200 people came on us with cutlasses, sticks and guns. They rushed on the policeman, W. J. Caulker, and chopped him and killed him and took his gun, and then threw him into the sea. They took the other two men and laid them side by side on the ground and chopped them to pieces. They killed my husband at my feet.

I asked them, "Why do you punish Sierra Leoneans so?" They say, "You pay the hut tax." They say, "The Sierra Leoneans with Bai Bureh had not paid the tax, so we did not kill them." They said we were lucky not to be caught before, as the Head Chief had, just the day before, said that no more women were to be killed. They said to me afterwards, "The government say we must not keep slaves, nor have women palaver, nor pledge human beings. We say, 'All right.' They come, last of all, and say we must pay for these dirty huts.

"The Government look on us as a lazy people, but the whole of us will die before we pay this tax. We will kill Captain Carr, and then the Governor will come; we will kill the Governor, and then the Queen will come herself. The policemen catch our big men and flog them. If they have not anyone to fight for them they must fight for themselves."

It was one of the war-boys who told me all this.

Africans were forced by the Europeans to pay taxes for living in their own huts.

EVIDENCE OF MISS HUGHES

My name is Miriam Deborah Hughes, daughter of Joseph Elias Hughes [a Creole minister]. The war fell on Thursday; that night we all got inside the mission-house, and a man came to tell us we must leave or we should all be killed.

We then went to Mokombo, where Farma took care of us. Mr. Hughes was not at the station when the war fell; he had gone to Bonthe to borrow some money. On Friday morning we wanted to return to the mission, but Farma told us to stay. Three of the mission men came and called Farma aside and told him about the war. Mammy asked Farma what they had been telling him about. He said, nothing about the war. The mission boy came up and caught hold of me. I told him to

let me go. He said, "We are war-boys." They carried us to Momasa and put us inside a house.

The war people used to call me and hold out their hands and mock and tell me to take the money to my mother to give to Governor Cardew. Most of them used to come every day, mocking about the tax. On Thursday night we heard my father's voice on the wharf, which was only a few yards off, but we could not see him out of the house. He said, "Friends, kill me one time, don't punish me too much." I saw his body after; the people would not allow me to go to it, and the water carried it away.

On Saturday they took three women and killed them at the water side. One man took us off and told us he was going to kill my mother for the tax, and they killed her. Then they took me to Taninahu. Then after that, people told me every day that it was the hut tax that made them kill Creoles, because they joined the English, who had done away with slavery and woman palaver.

*Rhodes Steals "Rhodesia"**

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: In most cases, Europeans gained control of their African colonies by signing treaties with local chiefs. Seldom, however, did the chiefs understand what they were signing. As a result, the Europeans were able to take more than the Africans thought they were giving.

Such tactics were used by Cecil Rhodes, the nineteenth-century British imperialist who made a fortune from African diamonds. (Rhodes scholarships to Oxford University are still financed from his estate.) In 1888, Rhodes sent one of his agents, Charles D. Rudd, to southern Africa to negotiate a treaty with King Lobengula of Matabeleland. Rudd, under Rhodes's instructions, offered to give Lobengula 1,000 rifles, 100,000 rounds of ammunition, and a monthly payment of 100 British pounds, and to sell him a gunboat for 5,000 pounds. In exchange, Rhodes would receive "complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in the Kingdom."

Lobengula signed this treaty, thinking that he was simply providing Rhodes with "a piece of ground to dig." Rhodes interpreted the treaty differently and took control of the entire kingdom. He never did give Lobengula the money

* Stanlake Samkange, *On Trial for My Country*, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1966, pp. 62-66, 130-34.

and merchandise that was promised. The kingdom eventually became the British colony known as Rhodesia. In 1965 Northern Rhodesia became the independent state of Zambia. Southern Rhodesia is still ruled by a white-settler minority, who have illegally seceded from the United Kingdom.

The following selection describes the way in which Rhodes tricked Lobengula. The first section is a mock trial of Rhodes's agent as it might have been conducted by Cecil Rhodes's father, a churchman in England. No such trial ever took place, but the ideas expressed in it are valid. The second section gives Lobengula's side of the story. In a sense, he is on trial too, as *his* father does the interrogating. The entire selection is taken from a novel, *On Trial for My Country,* by Stanlake Samkange, a contemporary Rhodesian scholar and politician. Although the book is fictional, it is based on historical documents.

As you read this selection, think of these questions:

What were the motives of Rhodes and Lobengula in signing the treaty?

How did each man betray his own father?]

THE RUDD CONCESSION

REV. RHODES: "Do you mean to say, Mr. Rudd, that you gave the impression to Lobengula that by signing your concession he was entering into some kind of a treaty in which he could call on the Queen if he were attacked by Boers [Dutch settlers in South Africa] or Portuguese?"

MR. RUDD: "Yes, sir, we gave just that impression."

"But was that a correct impression?"

"In theory, no. We had no power to commit the Queen like that, but in practice, yes. If, for instance, the Boers had tried to interfere in any way with Lobengula, the British Government would for different reasons not have allowed them. This is the point we made."

"I see! You meant that Britain would, for her own selfish ends, let us say, not allow the Matebele to be molested, because in actual fact she was only waiting for an appropriate opportunity to molest them herself?"

"That is correct."

"You did not, of course, commit Britain to not molesting Lobengula."

"No, we did not."

"And, naturally, you did not make this clear to Lobengula. As a matter of fact, you deliberately created the opposite impression in his mind. You made it appear to him that implicit in this treaty was the fact that the British would not attack him, did you not?"

"Yes, we did. I made him take that for granted."

"And yet, as a matter of fact, with Britain's connivance, only a few years later you attacked Lobengula and took his country. Is that not correct?"

"Yes, that is correct."

"Was that not a dishonest and dirty thing for Christian men to do?"

"I am afraid it was, but then, I never professed to care very much for Christianity, nor indeed do I believe that most Englishmen do, except in such matters as being christened, married and buried."

"I see. Is the Rev. Helm here?"

(Thompson answered, "Yes, he is here.")

"Will he come forward, please?"

(A reverend gentleman in clerical collar stepped forward to the altar rails.)

"Are you the Rev. Charles D. Helm, a minister ordained by the London Missionary Society?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Is it true that during the time you served as an interpreter at Lobengula's court, you were secretly in the employ of my son, Cecil Rhodes?"

"It is."

"Did you tell Lobengula this?"

"No, I did not."

"Why?"

"I did not see anything to be gained by telling him."

"Is it true that Lobengula took pains to pay particular attention to your advice on the subject of a mineral concession in his country?"

"It is true, he did."

"Is it not true that he listened to your advice so attentively because he believed you to be impartial in the matter?"

"I think he did."

"Why, then, did you not, in all honesty, let him know that the impartiality he was ascribing to you was misplaced?"

"Because there was nothing to be gained by doing that, and furthermore, my views were not necessarily colored by the fact that I was employed by your son."

"But you were not free to express any other views but those of your employer."

"That may be so. But it also just happened that my employer's views were also my views. So I honestly expressed them."

"Don't you think, then, that in appearing to be impartial when you were not, you were in fact dishonest?"

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"No, I do not. I never told Lobengula that I was impartial. If he ascribed impartiality to me that was his own business."

"But you knew him to be doing this and permitted him to do so."

"Yes, I did, because there was nothing to be gained by telling him otherwise."

"You keep on saying this as if your morality is based on gain."

"No, it is not. It is based on prudence, and that means doing what is right and, if people ascribe to me motives that I do not have (such as, for instance, that I am a minister of the Gospel because I thought it was an easy life), . . . [I ignore] them and continue to do what is right."

"And what was right in this case?"

"What was right in this case was that the Matebele power should be broken completely. I believed this to be the will of God. We labored for more than twelve years before we baptized our first convert to the Christian faith in Matebeleland. This was due to the fear of Mzilikazi and his son Lobengula. Since their regime stood between men and God, it was necessary for the regime to be removed."

"And you did not care how the regime was removed?"

"I cared. I would not have had them murdered, for instance, but I was quite prepared to let them walk into a trap that would eventually remove them from the scene."

"So you explained the concession in a manner that made them walk into the trap."

"I put such an interpretation on the concession as they were capable of understanding. After all, I did not fully understand the document myself."

"And since you wanted Lobengula to sign the concession —your interpretation was a favorable one."

"Yes, it was."

"You did not, for instance, tell them that the document in no way committed Britain to defending them in case of attack by, say, Khama?"

"I did not."

"You did not tell them that Britain herself was left free to attack them whereas they were required to keep the peace?"

"I did not."

"You did not draw their attention to the fact that the phrase 'together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure same' could be construed in a manner disadvantageous to them?"

"I did not."

"So you told them only what you wanted them to know, although they thought you were telling them everything. Since you wanted their power broken, even by being led into a trap, what you in fact told them was such as led them to the signing of the concession, which just happened to coincide with the wishes of those who paid you to do just that."

"Yes."

"A remarkable story. An even more remarkable missionary."

ATTEMPT TO STOP INVADERS WITH WORDS

Lobengula continued . . .

"I told the Queen these words. 'Lodzi [Rhodes] paid me money for which I gave him a piece of ground to dig. If you have heard that I have given my whole country to Lodzi, it is not my word. It is not true. I have not done so. Lodzi wants to take my country by strength.'

Lobengula. From an early photograph.

"I reminded the Queen that her words to me were that I was to send to her when I was troubled by white men. I told her that I was now in trouble and wanted her to help me control these children of hers.

"I received this reply from the Queen. 'The Queen assures Lobengula that the men assembled by the British South Africa Company are not assembled for the purpose of attacking him, but on the contrary, are assembled for a peaceful

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object, namely searching for gold. They were ordered to travel at a distance from the Matebele *kraals* [villages] and always to recollect that Lobengula is the friend of the Queen and that the Queen wishes to maintain peace and friendship with Lobengula.' This is the reply I received from the Queen. She spoke words of peace and yet her *impi* [army] was waiting at my doors with guns and bullets.

"I also sent a word to the *impi* at Macloutsie. I asked them, 'Has the King killed any white men that an *impi* is collecting on his border? Or have the white men lost anything they are looking for?' The answer I received was that the men were a working party, protected by soldiers who were going to Mashonaland along the road already arranged with me. Since I did not know of any such arrangement, I sent another letter to the *impi* and told them that I had made no agreement with anybody about a road to Mashonaland. I also said that all I knew was that Jameson could dig a hole near Tati and nowhere else. I said that if Jameson had thought that by Tati I meant Mashonaland, he was mistaken.

"The *impi* replied to me with these words. 'The *impi* must march on because of the orders of the Queen!' But is this not the same Queen who had told me that she was my friend and wanted to live in peace with me?

"I called together all my *impis* and told them to get ready for war. I ordered them to wait for my word. My *impis* were very keen to bathe their spears in the blood of the white man, but I decided to wait. I did not want to fight."

* * *

Mzilikazi interrupted, "Wait a minute. When you saw the white men's *impi* gathering at Macloutsie, you protested to

the Queen and asked why she was doing this when you were joined together, that is, allies, is that right?"

"Yes, that is so, my father."

"Although the Queen told you that these men were assembled for a peaceful purpose and that she wanted to live in peace with you, it was clear to you that these men were, in fact, an *impi* and not just peaceful travellers."

"That is so indeed, my father."

"There was no doubt in your mind what the gathering of an *impi* at Macloutsie meant, because you told the Queen that Rhodes wanted to take your country 'by strength'."

"That is so, my father."

"Why, then, did you not stand up to Rhodes and prevent him from taking your country by strength? Why did you not fight?"

"I thought that if I appealed to the white men's sense of justice and fair play, reminding them how good I had been to them since I had never killed or ill-treated a white man, they might hear my word and return to their homes."

"And when you saw that your words were falling on deaf ears, what did you do?"

"I sent another message and told them that I had not given them the road to Mashonaland."

"Yes, and they replied and told you that they had been given the road by their Queen and would only return on the orders of their Queen. What did you do then?"

"I mobilized the army and told them to wait for my word."

"Did you give that word?"

"No."

"Were the soldiers keen to fight?"

"Yes, they were dying to fight."

"Why did you not let them fight?"

"I wanted to avoid bloodshed and war."

"I see. A king of the Amandebele, who was born, bred, and lived only to spill blood of men, now did not want to spill blood. Was it only the white man's blood or all blood that you did not want to spill?"

There was silence.

"You heard my question. Answer me, Lobengula."

"I did not want to spill white men's blood."

"Why?"

"Because I wanted to be friends with them."

"Is that so? What did you do to be friends with them?"

"Nothing. I just did not kill them."

"And you allowed them to flout your word as king of the Amandebele? You let them have their way: march up to Mashonaland after you had told them as king, not to go? Is that right?"

"Yes. Because I knew we could never defeat the white man in battle."

"If that is so, why did you not do something to become their friend? Why did you not, like Khama, seek their protection and declare your country a British Protectorate?"

"I was afraid of the effect such a move would have on my people, particularly the *majaha*. I knew that they would have opposed it and might have taken up arms against me."

"So, fear of the *majaha* or a civil war prevented you from doing what you knew you should have done to save your country."

"Yes, I knew that if I fought the white men I would be beaten. If I sought the white man's friendship and protection, there would be opposition to me or civil war. So I decided to pretend to the white men that if they came into the country I would fight, and hoped that they would be afraid and not

come. When they called my bluff and came, I decided first to keep quiet."

"Was there no other way out of your dilemma?"

"I did consider marrying the Queen, but even though I hinted at this several times no one followed it up."

"I see!"

A memorial to Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town, South Africa, symbolizes the dominance Rhodes gained over southern Africa.

Postscript on Rhodesia *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: The activities of Cecil Rhodes and others like him are more than history. Their legacy lives, affecting the lives of Africans even today. For example, the following news story appeared in *The New York Times* on September 21, 1969.]

In the eastern region of Rhodesia there is a rocky, mountainous tract of 30 square miles that is the ancestral home of the Tangwena tribe. But under Rhodesia's Land Apportionment Act the area is designated "for whites only." It is owned by a white rancher. Four years ago the rancher asked the government of Prime Minister Ian Smith to oust the Tangwenas from his land. The government ordered the 1,500 members of the tribe to move.

Rekayi Tangwena, the tribe's gray-haired chief, appealed to the High Court in Salisbury, and the court last July upheld his people's right to stay. The government thereupon issued an edict overriding the court's decision.

Last Thursday, at dawn, a convoy of government troops moved into the Tangwenas' village. While tribal women stripped naked, wailed, threw dust on themselves, and clung to Chief Rekayi in a futile effort to prevent his removal, the troops proceeded to resettle the tribe on what the government said was better land.

The Tangwenas vowed to return. "Even if they burn my house," said the chief, "I shall build it back again." Some white liberals in Salisbury protested the government's action, but the Minister of Internal Affairs called the protests "sob stuff" and "Communist-inspired."

* "Resettlement in Rhodesia," September 21, 1969, © 1969 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

Report from the Congo *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: What effects did colonialism have on Africans? More specifically, how did taxation, forced labor, and other aspects of colonialism change the lives of the people? The answers to these questions vary from colony to colony. In some colonies, the presence of the Europeans had very little immediate effect; in others, it led to great disruption and even atrocities.

In the Belgian Congo, as you will see in the following selection, the effects were extreme. King Leopold of Belgium claimed that his intentions in Africa were "humane and benevolent," that his agents in the Congo performed a "noble and elevated" task, that they "had to carry on the work of civilization in Equatorial Africa." Writing to his men in the Congo in 1897, he said, "I am glad to think that our agents . . . always bear in mind the rules of the honorable career in which they are engaged. Animated with a pure sentiment for patriotism, recking [caring] little of their own blood, they will care all the more for the natives who will find in them the powerful protectors of life and property, the kindly guardians they need so much."

Decide for yourself if the Belgians were "protectors of life and property." The author of this selection, Roger Case-

* *The Black Diaries of Roger Casement*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904.

ment, was an Irishman working for the British government. He went to the Congo in 1903 to investigate conditions there. The following is part of what he had to report.

As you read this selection, think of these questions:

Why did Africans desert their villages?

What were the main interests of the Belgians in the Congo?]

London, December 11, 1903

My Lord,

I have the honor to submit my Report on my recent journey on the Upper Congo.

I left Matadi on the 5th of June, and arriving at Leopoldville on the 6th, remained in the neighborhood of Stanley Pool until the 2nd of July, when I set out for the Upper Congo. My return to Leopoldville was on the 15th of September, so that the period spent in the Upper River was one of only two and a half months. . . .

Although my visit was of such short duration, and the points touched at nowhere lay far off the beaten tracks of communication, the region visited was one of the most central in the Congo State, and the district in which most of my time was spent, that of the Equator, is probably the most productive. Moreover, I was enabled, by visiting this district, to contrast its present-day state with the condition in which I had known it some sixteen years ago. . . .

Perhaps the most striking change observed during my journey into the interior was the great reduction observable everywhere in native life. Communities I had formerly

known as large and flourishing centers of population are today entirely gone, or now exist in such diminished numbers as to be no longer recognizable. . . . These people, some two years ago, decided to abandon their homes, and in one night the great majority of them crossed over into the French territory on the north shores of Stanley Pool. Where formerly had stretched . . . populous native African villages, I saw today a few scattered European houses, belonging either to government officials or local traders. In Leopoldville today there are not, I should estimate, 100 of the original natives or their descendants now residing.

* * *

I asked, first, why they had left their homes, and had come to live in a strange, far-off country among the K . . . where they owned nothing, and were little better than servitors. All, when this was put, women as well, shouted out: "On account of the rubber tax levied by the government posts."

I asked, then, how this tax was imposed. One of them, who had been hammering out an iron collar on my arrival, spoke first: "I am N.N. These two beside me are O.O. and P.P., all of us Y. . . . From our country each village had to take twenty loads of rubber. These loads were big; they were as big as this [producing an empty basket which came nearly up to the handle of my walking stick]. That was the first size. We had to fill that up, but as rubber got scarcer the white man reduced the amount. We had to take these loads in four times a month."

Question: "How much pay do you get for this?"

Answer (entire audience): "We got no pay. We got nothing."

And then N.N., whom I asked again, said:

"Our village got cloth and a little salt, but not the people who did the work. Our Chief ate up the cloth; the workers got nothing. The pay was a fathom of cloth and a little salt for every basketful, but it was given to the Chief, never to the men. It used to take ten days to get the twenty baskets of rubber—we were always in the forest to find the rubber vines, to go without food, and our women had to give up cultivating the fields and gardens. Then we starved. Wild beasts—the leopards—killed some of us while we were working away in the forest and others got lost or died from exposure and starvation and we begged the white men to leave us alone, saying we could get no more rubber, but the white men and their soldiers said: 'Go. You are only beasts yourselves, you are only *nyama* [meat].' We tried, always going further into the forest, and when we failed and our rubber was short, the soldiers came to our towns and killed us. Many were shot, some had their ears cut off; others were tied up with ropes round their necks and bodies and taken away. The white men sometimes at the post did not know of the bad things the soldiers did to us, but it was the white men who sent the soldiers to punish us for not bringing in enough rubber."

Another native took up the story:

"We said to the white man: 'We are not enough people now to do what you want of us. Our country has not many people in it and we are dying fast. We are killed by the work you make us do, by the stoppage of our plantations and the breaking up of our homes.' The white man looked at us and said: 'There are lots of people in Mputu' (Europe, the white man's country). 'If there are many people in the white man's country there must be many people in the black man's country.' The white man who said this was the chief

Europeans trained Africans to become policemen and soldiers to serve colonial purposes, often requiring them to fight against other Africans.

white man at F.F. . . . His name was A.B. He was a very bad man. Other white men at Bula Matadi had been bad and wicked. These had killed us often and killed us by their own hands as well as by their soldiers'. Some white men were good. These ones told them to stay in their homes and did not hunt and chase them as the others had done, but after what they had suffered they did not trust . . . anyone's word and they had fled from their country and were now going to stay here, far from their homes, in this country where there was no rubber."

Question: "How long is it since you left your homes, since the big trouble you speak of?"

Answer: "It lasted three full seasons, and it is now four seasons since we fled and came into this country."

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Question: "How many days is it to your own country?"

Answer: "Six days of quick marching. We fled because we could not endure the things done to us. Our Chiefs were hanged and we were killed and starved and worked beyond endurance to get rubber."

Question: "How do you know it was the white men themselves who ordered these cruel things to be done to you? These things must have been done without the white men's knowledge by the black soldiers."

Answer: "The white men told their soldiers: 'You kill only women; you cannot kill men.' So then the soldiers when they killed us" (here P.P., who was answering, stopped and hesitated, and then, pointing to the private parts of my bulldog—it was lying asleep at my feet) "then they cut off those things and took them to the white men, who said: 'It is true, you have killed men.'"

Question: "You mean to tell me that any white man ordered your bodies to be mutilated like that and those parts of you carried to him?"

Answer: (all shouting out): "Yes, any white man. D.E. did it." There is no doubt that these people were not inventing. Their vehemence, their flashing eyes, their excitement was not simulated. Doubtless they exaggerated the numbers, but they were clearly telling me what they knew and loathed. . . .

A few days afterwards when I was at Stanley Pool, I received further evidence in a letter of which the following is an extract:

> . . . At one place I saw lying in the grass surrounding the post, which is built on the site of several large towns, human bones, skulls, and in some cases complete skeletons. On enquiring the reason for this unusual sight: "Oh," said

my informant, "when the *bambote* [soldiers] were sent to make us cut rubber there were so many killed we got tired of burying, and sometimes when we wanted to bury we were not allowed to."

"But why did they kill you so?"

"Oh, sometimes we were ordered to go and the sentry would find us preparing food to eat while in the forest, and he would shoot two or three to hurry us along. Sometimes we would try and do a little work on our plantations, so that when the harvest time came we should have something to eat, and the sentry would shoot some of us to teach us that our business was not to plant but to get rubber. Sometimes we were driven off to live for a fortnight in the forest without any food and without anything to make a fire with, and many died of cold and hunger. Sometimes the quantity brought was not sufficient, and then several would be killed to frighten us to bring more. Some tried to run away, and died of hunger and privation in the forest in trying to avoid the State posts."

"But," said I, "if the sentries killed you like that, what was the use? You could not bring more rubber when there were fewer people."

"Oh, as to that, we do not understand it. These are the facts."

And looking around on the scene of desolation, on the untended farms and neglected palms, one could not but believe that in the main the story was true. From State sentries came confirmation and particulars even more horrifying, and the evidence of a white man as to the state of the country—the unspeakable condition of the prisons at the State posts—all combined to convince me over and over again that, during the last seven years, this "Domaine Privé" (*private kingdom*) of King Leopold has been a veritable hell on earth.

Leopold, the Janitor *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Roger Casement's report brought the Congo situation to the attention of the world. King Leopold denied the charges Casement made, but public opinion in Europe forced Leopold to appoint an impartial commission to investigate the Congo affair. The commission, consisting of a Swiss, a Belgian, and an Italian, visited the Congo in 1904 and found conditions to be just as bad as Casement had reported.

Two years later, in 1906, the American journalist and novelist Richard Harding Davis also visited the Congo. The following selection, from Davis' book *The Congo and Coasts of Africa,* expresses the author's opinion of Leopold's rule in Africa.

As you read this selection, think of the following questions:

Why did Davis feel that Leopold had no right to rule in the Congo?

What makes a ruler or leader "legitimate"?]

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* Richard Harding Davis, *The Congo and Coasts of Africa,* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.

In trying to sum up what I found in the Congo Free State, I think what one fails to find there is of the greatest significance. To tell what the place is like, you must tell what it lacks. One must write of the Congo always in the negative. It is as though you asked: "What sort of a house is this one Jones has built?" and were answered: "Well, it hasn't any roof, and it hasn't any cellar, and it has no windows, floors, or chimneys. It's that kind of a house."

When first I arrived in the Congo the time I could spend there seemed hopelessly inadequate. After I'd been there a month, it seemed to me that in a very few days anyone could obtain a painfully correct idea of the place and the way it was administered. If an orchestra starts on a piece of music with all the instruments out of tune, it need not play through the entire number for you to know that the instruments are out of tune.

The charges brought against Leopold II, as King of the Congo, are three:

1. That he has made slaves of the twenty million blacks he promised to protect.
2. That, in spite of his promise to keep the Congo open to trade, he has closed it to all nations.
3. That the revenues of the country and all of its trade he has retained for himself.

Anyone who visits the Congo and remains only two weeks will be convinced that of these charges Leopold is guilty. In that time he will not see atrocities, but he will see that the natives are slaves, that no foreigner can trade with them, that in the interest of Leopold alone the country is milked.

He will see that the government of Leopold is not a government. It preserves the perquisites and outward signs of

King Leopold II of Belgium made the Congo his "private domain."

government. It coins money, issues stamps, collects taxes. But it assumes none of the responsibilities of government. The Congo Free State is only a great trading house. And in it Leopold is the only wholesale and retail trader. He gives a bar of soap for rubber and makes a "turnover" of a cup of salt for ivory. He is not a monarch. He is a shopkeeper.

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And were the country not so rich in rubber and ivory, were the natives not sweated so severely, he also would be a bankrupt shopkeeper. Were the Congo properly managed, it would be one of the richest territories on the surface of the earth. As it is, through ignorance and cupidity, it is being despoiled and its people are the most wretched human beings. In the White Book containing the reports of British vice-consuls on conditions in the Congo from April of last year to January of this year, Mr. Mitchell tells how the enslavement of the people still continues, how "they" (the conscripts, as they are called) "are hunted in the forest by soldiers, and brought in chained by the neck like criminals." They then, though conscripted to serve in the army, are set to manual labor. They are slaves. The difference between the slavery under Leopold and the slavery under the Arab raiders is that the Arab was the better and kinder master. He took "prisoners" just as Leopold seizes "conscripts," but he had too much foresight to destroy whole villages, to carry off all the black man's livestock, and to uproot his vegetable gardens. He proposed to return. His motive was purely selfish, but his methods, compared with those of Leopold, were almost considerate. The work the State today requires of the blacks is so oppressive that they have no time, no heart to labor for themselves.

How much Leopold cares for the material welfare of the natives is illustrated by the price he paid the "boys" who worked on the government steamer in which I went up the Kasai. They were bound on a three-month voyage, and for each month's work on this trip they were given in payment their rice and 80 cents. That is, at the end of the trip they received what in our money would be equivalent to $2.40. And that they did not receive in money but in "trade

goods," which are worth about 10 per cent less than their money value. So that of the $2.80 that is due them, these black boys, who for three months sweated in the dark jungle cutting wood, are robbed by the King of 24 cents. One would dislike to grow rich at that price.

The fact that Leopold has granted to American syndicates control over two great territories in the Congo may bring about a better state of affairs, and, in any event, it may arouse public interest in this country. It certainly should be of interest to Americans that some of the most prominent of their countrymen have gone into close partnership with a speculator as unscrupulous and as notorious as is Leopold, and that they are to exploit a country which as yet has only been developed by the help of slavery, with all its attendant evils of cruelty and torture.

That Leopold has no right to give these concessions is a matter which chiefly concerns the men who are to pay for them, but it is an interesting fact.

The Act of Berlin expressly states: *No Power which exercises, or shall exercise, sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions shall be allowed to grant therein a monopoly or favor of any kind in matters of trade.*

Leopold is only a steward placed by the Powers over the Congo. He is a janitor. And he has no more authority to give even a foot of territory to Belgians, Americans, or Chinamen than the janitor of an apartment house has authority to fill the rooms with his wife's relations or sell the coal in the basement.

White Man's Cotton *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: When the Europeans came to Africa, they brought more than a new way of making a living. They also brought a new way of looking at the world. Africans exposed to Western education and Christian beliefs developed attitudes that conflicted sharply with their own traditions. They became men of two worlds, uncomfortable in both. Forced labor, evil as it was, never had the lasting impact of the cultural changes brought by colonialism. Physical pain, after all, comes to an end, but a man's attitude toward his fellow men and toward his God lasts a lifetime.

The following selection illustrates some of the psychological conflicts suffered by Africans under European control. It tells of a young man from the Congo, Masoudi, who learned some of the white man's ways by leaving his village to work for the Belgians and attend a mission school. When he returned to his native village six or seven years later, he felt out of place. He considered his own people "backward" and "superstitious"; they considered him a little crazy, a man with the "Evil Eye." When the Belgians de-

* Colin M. Turnbull, *The Lonely African*, London: Chatto & Windus Ltd.; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962, pp. 22-27. Copyright © 1962 by Colin M. Turnbull. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster and Chatto & Windus Ltd.

cided to force the Africans in the area to grow cotton, Masoudi was the logical choice to lead the project. The story opens when the Belgian administrator arrives in Masoudi's village to break the news to the people.

The story is true. The author, British anthropologist Colin M. Turnbull, lived in the Congo for three years, gathering material for *The Lonely African* and other books. He is now on the staff of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

As you read this selection, think of the following questions:

What problems does Masoudi have with his new job?

How does economics conflict with religion in the story?]

It was not long after Masoudi's marriage that [the village of] Ndola received a visit from the administrator himself. He asked the chief, Matungi, to call the village together. When everyone had assembled, the Bwana Mkubwa [white man] told them that from now onwards they must all plant certain crops in addition to those they normally planted. Cotton was the chief innovation. He explained that when the cotton was picked, the government would send around trucks to pick it up, and that everyone would be given pieces of metal and paper that could be exchanged for cloth and beads and all manner of other things at Matadi. In time there would even be a store right there in Ndola, where they could use this new money.

The administrator explained that this was necessary to make the work of the government possible, in setting up a hospital, dispensaries, and schools. He also said that he wanted some of the men of Ndola to volunteer their services

for work on the roads. He added that those who did not produce cotton, as required, would be locked up or compulsorily put to work with the road gangs; and that if there were not enough road-work volunteers, they would simply be forced into service.

Matungi listened to all this courteously, and then asked for time to consult with the elders. The consultation evidently

Colonialism deeply influenced the way Africans expressed themselves. These tombs of Nigerian royalty display European-looking figures, complete with Western-style clothes and even walking sticks.

did not take long, and he returned to face the administrator and tell him that he was sorry, but his village wanted nothing to do with cotton or road work; they preferred simply to live as they had always lived, without this new money and the trade goods that it could buy.

The administrator, unwilling to use force so early in the program, argued his point and appealed to Masoudi, who, as usual, was standing apart from the others. Masoudi said that he had tried to tell his relatives about the ways of the white man, and about all the good things that were being done at Matadi, but they had not listened. . . .

The administrator left, and nothing much happened for some months. Presumably he was sounding out other villages in the district. But eventually, backed up where necessary by the authority of armed native police imported from the north, all the recalcitrant chiefs and headmen were deposed, and more amenable successors appointed. Masoudi was appointed Capita, or headman, in Matungi's place. Matungi made no objection, because he knew that it would make little difference one way or the other, and he was too sensible to argue with savages armed with guns. The government, with these armed savages, an animal people from the north who did not even circumcise, would get their cotton and road workers, but they would never break the sacred tie between him and his people.

Masoudi felt much the same way. He knew that the people would not give him the allegiance that was Matungi's, but that he would have authority over them in other matters, in support of which he could demand the assistance of the police. He recognized that Matungi's position as ritual leader of the people would remain unaltered. But this was his, Masoudi's, chance to prove to the villagers that he had been

right from the start; that he did not possess the Evil Eye, that the ways of the white man were good, if strange; that all of them could own many goats and metal pots and pans, oil lanterns to see by night, and a bicycle to ride from one village to the next along the new road in a quarter of the time it took to walk. He was convinced that he was right, that odd though they might seem, the white men certainly were powerful, and the thing to do was to acquire the same power by copying their ways. He even saw his friends and relatives eventually coming around to liking him again, and speaking to him and his wife. . . .

Masoudi admitted that he felt some gratification in having behind him the power of the police, though he had been refused a policeman of his own such as the big chiefs had. If he had to use force to show his relatives that he was right about the white man, he would do it. They deserved harsh treatment for the way they had behaved toward him. He saw himself as bringing them all multipocketed clothes, shining metal- and enamelware, oil lanterns and bicycles; in return for which all they had to do was to plant a little cotton and do a little work on the road.

Masoudi has long since given up that dream. He still holds to the conviction that many of the white man's ways of living are good, but he no longer believes that they can be transplanted. And he increasingly regrets having abandoned his heritage.

For Masoudi quickly found that he had both more and less authority than he had bargained for. He was efficient at seeing that the cotton was planted and harvested, for the administration sent people to help supervise until the villagers were accustomed to the procedure. He kept notebooks,

listing everyone in the village, how much they planted and how much they harvested. He was prepared to take the blame for anyone who failed to produce the minimum amount, and he took such measures as he thought fit to prevent any failure. These measures included fines of chickens or goats, under threat of calling in the police to take the offenders away and put them in boxes. Of course he never intended to call the police. Masoudi was far too mild a man for that. So he was horrified when on one of his periodic visits a new young administrator ordered some villagers beaten for not having kept their plantations in good order. When he protested on their behalf, Masoudi was told that if he disapproved of beatings, he had better keep a sharper eye on the work, and that if the plantations were as far behindhand on the next visit, he would be beaten himself.

In fact the administrator took all sorts of measures of which Masoudi disapproved strongly—such as compelling men to work on the roads and then fining them because they were behind with their work on the plantations. But in these matters he found that he had no authority at all. It was bitter that he should be blamed for these matters by the villagers. . . .

Masoudi had learned early the futility of questioning the why of the ways of the white man. He just accepted the fact that they did not understand him any more than he understood them, and he tried to make the best of his unhappy position. The government considered that he had taken over all Matungi's powers and responsibilities, but from his point of view it was a sacrilege even to consider the possibility, and sheer stupidity to try to put it into practice. Yet if he was going to be fined every time Matungi did something wrong, he would have to do something about it. And this was what

worried him. The more he saw of the white man's ways, the more he fell back on his old beliefs, and to take any action against Matungi was in direct contradiction to all those beliefs.

It was not that Masoudi was any the less convinced about the desirability of many of the things the white man had to offer. Their clothes were far superior, even if, as he had been told, they were the real reason why his villagers had to plant that ridiculous cotton which everyone knew ruined the soil. The oil lanterns and bicycle were also good things, and so was the hospital in Matadi, and the traveling doctor who was much better at curing some illnesses than Matungi had ever been. Even the road was a good thing. . . . [But] what Masoudi could never understand was why the white man expected him and the others to change their beliefs, to abandon the ways of the ancestors. Why should it not be possible to continue in the way of the ancestors, the way they *had* to follow if they were not to be condemned to the world of spirits and ghosts after death, and still wear the white man's clothes, grow his cotton, and look after his roads? Did the black man expect the white man to change *his* beliefs, to abandon *his* traditions?

*New Laws and New Chiefs**

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: In the last reading, we saw that Masoudi had difficulty enforcing his new authority over the traditional authority of the Chief, Matungi. The reason, of course, was that Masoudi derived his "right" to rule from the Europeans, whereas Matungi derived his right from his people themselves.

Such conflicts over authority were common during the colonial period. The following selection shows why the conflicts developed and how the Europeans tried to resolve them. The author, Dilim Okafor-Omali, is a young African from Eastern Nigeria (Biafra). The book from which this reading is taken, *A Nigerian Villager in Two Worlds,* is an account of the author's father's life in a village community. This chapter was originally entitled "The Collapse of Local Institutions."

As you read this selection, think of these questions:

What kind of Africans became Warrant Chiefs?

Why were the Warrant Chiefs hated?]

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* Dilim Okafor-Omali, *A Nigerian Villager in Two Worlds,* London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1965, pp. 89-92. Reprinted by permission of Faber & Faber Ltd. from the chapter entitled "The Collapse of Local Institutions."

Before the white man came, the administration of the villages was in the hands of the senior men. Most of these senior men held titles, so that it is correct to say that the administration and judicature [handling of justice] of the village were in the hands of the titled men. But when the white man set up his first "Native Court" in the town, these titled men were robbed of their traditional authority.

This "Native Court," which was introduced by the white man not long after he took control of Nweke's town, had no relation to the existing forms of social life. The jurisdiction of this court covered a wide area of land containing previously unrelated social groups, so that it was difficult for the people to appreciate its significance. The court was presided over by the white man, with a number of native members as his assessors. The appointment of these "Native Court" members led to great trouble throughout Ibo land.

The traditional leaders of the people, though conscious of their responsibility in normal situations, failed to make any contact with the white man. This was because they generally behaved in a reserved way, and did not take the initiative in meeting people or in deciding matters. They waited for the white man to approach them.

But other men, who had no traditional authority, did not hesitate to step forward. It was these men whom the white man appointed as members of the "Native Court," the appointment being by a "Warrant." They took it in turn to sit on the bench with the white man, as his assessors. It was their duty to see that the orders of the white man were carried out in their respective village-groups. Because they usurped the functions of a chief, they were known as "Warrant Chiefs," though they were merely agents of the white man, and bore no resemblance to true African chiefs, who were

fathers or spiritual heads of their people, and whose absolute powers were kept in constant check by means of taboos and councils.

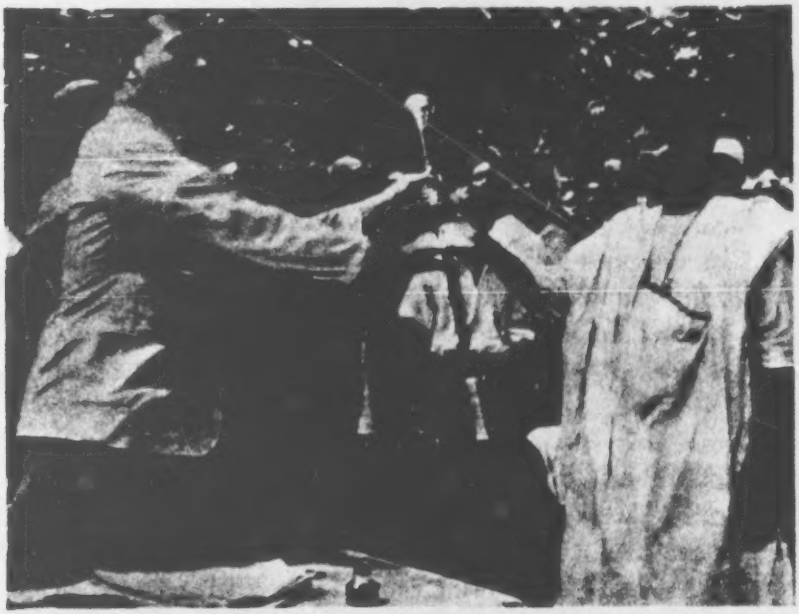
On one occasion, one of these "Warrant Chiefs" visited Nweke's village to announce that the white man wanted some men to carry his loads. Before the Warrant Chief had finished speaking, a senior titled man exclaimed, "What is this boy thinking about? Does he not know where he is! I am going away." Another remarked, "Is that what he called us for? Do you think he is in his right senses?" Other senior men were equally annoyed, and said to the Warrant Chief, "Is that what you have come to tell us—that we should come and carry loads! If the white man told you that, why did you not tell him we would not do it? Are we under any obligation to him?"

The Warrant Chief was not at all tactful, and when the villagers showed their resentment, he only made his orders more imperative [emphatic]. Still the people did not listen to him, so he threatened them, saying he was going to make them obey. He left, but soon returned, accompanied by two court messengers, who immediately arrested a senior titled man. The whole village was astir. But the villagers could do nothing, as they were by now fearful of the white man's war weapons. The Warrant Chief told them that the titled man would not be released until they had nominated the members of a party to carry the white man's loads. He departed with the arrested titled man, but before he had gone far he was called back, and the titled man was exchanged for a gang of young men, who were forced to carry the loads.

The arrest of this titled man was considered an insult and an abomination by the villagers, and their forced acceptance of the insult was humiliating. Titled men had previously

always been considered as worthy of the highest respect. Thus the Warrant Chiefs earned nothing but hatred and disfavor in the village, and there were frequent clashes between them and the people. Had the white man first studied the social institutions of the people, and sent his orders through the traditional leaders, probably no hard feelings on the part of the people toward himself and his agents would have developed.

A little later, in order (he thought) to improve the standard of "Native Administration," the white man retired from the presidency of the Native Court. His place was taken by Warrant Chiefs, and this gave them more opportunity for corrupt conduct, particularly as there was then no right



The colonial powers created their own chiefs who "ruled" by European warrant and not by traditional authority.

of appeal from the "Native Court." These courts became the sole link between the white man and the people. Semi-educated Court Clerks, assisted by court messengers, took control of them. Both clerks and messengers were corrupt. They issued summonses, gave orders for arrest, and took custody of prisoners without consulting either the Warrant Chiefs or the white man. Because most of the Warrant Chiefs were illiterate, the Court Clerk was responsible for conveying the white man's orders to them, and this made his position very strong. There were many instances of Court Clerks issuing warrants of arrest against their personal enemies, and they, as well as the Warrant Chiefs, took large bribes.

Yet it must also be said that Warrant Chiefs at times gave protection to Christian converts, and they supported the schools by backing the Christians against their opponents. (On the other hand, at other times the Warrant Chiefs quarrelled with the literate Christians because they challenged the Chiefs' authority, and they then drove the Christians out of the town.) When the villagers saw that the power of the white man was too much for them, they adopted an attitude of indifference with regard to the schools and they obeyed, though with reluctance, the orders of the Warrant Chiefs.

The loss of their authority by the traditional rulers, and the corrupt conduct of the Warrant Chiefs, led to a rapid disintegration of local institutions. This being so, the term "Native Court" was obviously a misnomer [wrong name].

The period of conflict between indigenous [local African] culture and Western culture was coming to an end. Indigenous culture was giving way to Western culture.

Ibrahimo Becomes a Christian *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Most Africans admit that the Christian missionaries did an enormous amount of good in Africa. They educated the young, nursed the sick, and trained scores of village workers. Speaking of the missionaries in a editorial on the occasion of Pope Paul's recent visit to Africa, the *Reporter Magazine* in Nairobi, Kenya, said: "They have made an impact on the minds of men and women which adds up to a tremendous power for good. . . . For every 'convert' they can add to their list of achievements a dozen craftsmen, skilled in various trades; a score of educated Africans who are now running the affairs of their countries. . . ."

There is no doubt that Christian missionaries brought some of the most beneficial aspects of Western culture to Africa. But they also brought an alien religion that conflicted with traditional African beliefs. The missionaries were single-minded in their goal: they went to the "dark continent" first and foremost to win souls for Christ. If this meant building hospitals, then they built hospitals, but while they healed wounds, they also preached the gospel.

* Colin M. Turnbull, *The Lonely African,* London: Chatto & Windus Ltd.; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962, pp. 99-108, 110-13. Copyright © 1962 by Colin M. Turnbull. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster and Chatto & Windus Ltd.

Moreover, the missionaries, as even devout Christians will admit, were extremely narrow in their outlook. They taught that Christianity was the *only* right religion and that all other religious practices must stop. Such teachings confused the Africans, who believed that all religions were good and saw no reason for abandoning their own beliefs in order to adopt some of the good aspects of Christianity.

In the following selection, Ibrahimo, a Congolese boy about 12 years old, becomes a victim of religious conflict. He wants to join the other boys of his age in the all-important ceremony of circumcision, the ritual that marks the passage from boyhood to manhood. Such initiation rites are very common throughout Africa and in other parts of the world; they have been practiced for centuries. Most cultures, in fact, observe some form of initiation into adulthood. In the West, the Jewish bar mitzvah and the Christian confirmation are the most common rites of passage.

Ibrahimo's father was a Christian convert. When he discovered that his son wanted to go through the traditional African ceremony, he notified the local missionary, who put a stop to it. The manner in which this missionary interfered is not typical (although the story is true), but it does indicate the determination of Christian missionaries in Africa to stamp out traditional beliefs.

As you read this selection, taken from Colin Turnbull's *The Lonely African,* bear in mind that the initiation ceremony is the most significant event in a young African's life. His participation makes him a full member of the tribe. Indeed, it makes him a full human being, for without a tribe, a man is nothing.

What kind of man is Bwana Spence, the missionary in the story?

What kind of man will Ibrahimo probably become?]

"I do not think my father was a Christian when he married my mother; I know they married in the way of our own people anyway. But he became a Christian before I entered my mother's stomach, and took the name Isaaka. So when I was born and had shown that I had come to this world to stay, he called me Ibrahimo, because it is our custom to name our children after their grandfathers. I do not know what my grandfather's name really was; my father never speaks of him.

"By becoming a Christian my father won a good job as a cook at the Mission. He had to leave because my mother refused to change her ways, and the Mission would not have her there living with him, because they said they were not married. So they returned to Ndola and I was born here and have lived here ever since. There are other Christians at Ndola, but my father has told me that the Mission does not want us to have anything to do with them; they do not believe in the same God. Their leader uses his *baraza* [home] as a church, and has services every Sunday, but we never go; it would be a sin. My father did not like me to play with their children, so at Ndola I have no Christian friends. But I used to have plenty of other friends, and my mother was always very good to us and gave us plenty of good things to eat when we were hungry.

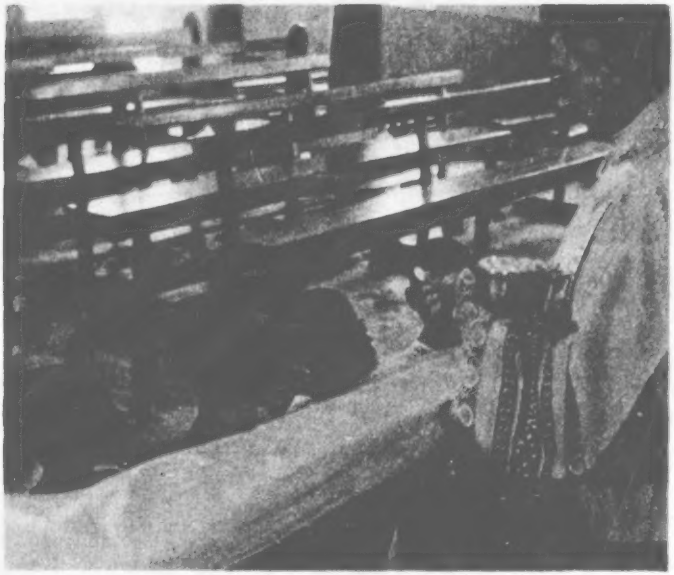
"As I grew older my father said I should not play even with my own brothers, and that I should go away to school, to the Mission on the far side of Matadi. My mother did not like this, and there was much fighting and beating. In the end, my mother left my father and while she was away I was taken to school.

"It was a good place, though all the buildings were made of brick and were hot, unlike the houses we built. And we

were not allowed to light fires inside at night, to keep us safe and to keep the mosquitoes away. Even if we could have lit them, it would not have done much good, as every wall was broken open with windows, and the smoke would all have escaped. But we learned many things, how to read and write and how to play the strange games of the white man with leather balls. This hurt my feet terribly at first, for we were not allowed to wear shoes, although nearly all of us had them. They said it would spoil the shoes. . . .

"It was difficult to know how to be a Christian, because Bwana Spence [the missionary] did not like to be asked questions. He read to us from the Big Book and often it did not make sense. When I was still new there I would ask questions, and sometimes he would answer them, but usually he said I did not have to understand, I just had to believe what he said. He got very angry if we asked about all the men in the Big Book who had so many wives, when he taught us that when we were older we should have only one. He said that Bwana Yesu [Jesus] said so. But neither Bwana Yesu nor any of his brothers had any wives, so how could they know? . . .

"There were some things that could not be just because Bwana Spence did not understand. In his teachings he told us to be like brothers to each other, to share everything we had and to help each other. But while there were many of us in one house, sleeping in the same room even though we were from different tribes, he had a house all to himself. He ate three big meals a day while we had two, and his food was much better and much more plentiful. He bought all manner of things at Matadi to eat himself, and we never tasted any of it. He had lots of clothes, and he had many servants to wait on him and do all his work for him. He



These young Africans receiving communion from a Catholic priest have been exposed to beliefs that will deeply affect their traditional culture.

never asked us into his house, although he would come to ours. In the evenings even if his wife was at the hospital and he was alone, he would not talk to any of us, but just stayed by himself, eating and drinking his tea or coffee. He was never without food, day or night. He must have been very wealthy.

"He had a child too . . . but he would not let her play with any of us or even talk to us. There were some other white children at the Mission but they all lived in the white man's houses, and were taught separately and ate separately and played separately. It was a pity. They could have had a lot of happiness with us.

"Bwana Spence's wife was a proud woman who did not smile. She gave orders, even to men, and got very angry when

anyone disobeyed her. She taught the white children, and she worked at the hospital. She always looked as though she was going to be sick, although when I asked her once if she was not well, she said she was perfectly all right. She lied. She was not all right. A relative of mine came to the hospital while I was there because her stomach was full and hurting, but the child would not come. She had been bound with vines and had tried everything she knew to make the child come, but it refused. When Bwana Spence's wife saw her, she told her that the child had not wanted to come because it had been put into the stomach in sin. It could still be saved, she said, if my relative would become a Christian and have a Christian marriage. But my relative was already married, and said she could not be married again. I think the Bwana Spence's wife put a curse on her, because the first part of the child to come out was a hand, and the rest of it was dead. They say that this was one time when Bwana Spence's wife smiled.

"We were allowed to go home during the holidays, but I liked it at the school because I had many friends there, and at Ndola the people thought of me as being different, like my father, and they laughed at me. But the longer I stayed at the Mission, the more I was worried. They were doing very good things for us, but they did not seem to like us or want us to be their friends. They were very selfish about their God too, and although they used to ask Him, when we all talked to Him together, to look after us and save our souls and accept us as His children, they never let us stand up and ask for things. They would ask for new motor cars or for money to make roads so that they could travel farther and meet more of our people and make them Christians, but they never let *us* ask for motor cars.

Mission schools taught more than religion. Here a Dutch priest teaches a student the first notes of the Dutch national anthem.

"And once when Bwana Spence's girl child was hot with fever, he made us all ask together for her to be made better, though none of us had even spoken to her. We thought this funny, because she had been hot with fever before, as we all were at times, and it was nothing serious. But we asked for her to be made better, and two days later she was. But that same week a man was brought in who was very ill indeed, and Bwana Spence did not even go to see him, and did not ask God to help him because, he said, the man was not a

Christian. We all thought this was a terrible thing, and we wondered and talked among ourselves about what kind of God this was. We knew we could not ask Bwana Spence, so we asked Amboko. Amboko was almost as cross with us as Bwana Spence would have been, for the man was his relation. I think he was cross because he could not explain it either. I began to wonder if I would be allowed to ask God to help my mother if she became ill, because she is not a Christian. Amboko said no, I would have to ask the ancestors, that they would always listen.

"I had been at the school perhaps two years when something very bad happened. I was home on vacation and one day Matungi came up to me and took me into the plantation to talk with me. This was a great honor, for Matungi is really our chief, and he is a great and good man. I think I knew what he wanted, though, and I was afraid. It had been three years since the last *nkumbi* initiation festival, and it was time for another. At this festival we boys are taken and we are made into men. It is a very difficult and dangerous thing . . . and we are given the marks on our bodies that make us acceptable to the ancestors. These festivals used to last many months, even a year, but now the Bwana Mkubwa at Matadi does not like it because he says it takes us all away from our work, and the white Christians say it is evil. They do not know, because they do not understand and are as ignorant about it as little children.

"Matungi told me that it was time for me to enter the *nkumbi,* and to learn the ways of my ancestors. He said that he did not mind me learning to read and write, or even being a Christian, but that it was very wrong for me to forget who I was. He said that only by seeing the *nkumbi* could I make myself fit for the ancestors; by becoming like them, I could

become one of them. This was plainly a good thing, and Matungi further showed me that no matter what the Christians said, nobody could deny that I had a father, and he had a father, and his father before him had a father. Nobody could deny that we did have ancestors, and if we had ancestors, how could it be right to neglect and disrespect them when they made life possible for us? I told Matungi that even the Christian teachings said the same thing, and told us that we were to honor our fathers and mothers.

"Matungi was very wise, and I told him that although I was frightened, I *did* want to see the *nkumbi.* He was very pleased, and he gave me a cigarette and told me that I would soon be a real man, and that I would be glad. He also told me not to be frightened, that only children were frightened.

"I ran straight back through the plantation to the village and told my brothers. They were all very surprised, and they congratulated me and said they were happy, because they had been afraid that I would be separated from them and not become a man with them. Now we would all do this dangerous thing together and become men together, and we would all learn the wonderful secrets about our ancestors, and learn how to please them and earn a place beside them in the afterworld.

* * *

"Late that night there was a big noise in the village, and I was . . . sorry, because I had wanted it to be a good night—it was the first time I had ever slept with my brothers. I dreamed of all the wonderful times to come, and of all the friends I would have from now on. Early in the morning I hurried out to my mother's plantation, but she was not there. I went home, and she was not there, neither was my father.

This was not strange, as everyone goes about his work in the morning, so I went back to the plantation to wait for my mother. She did not come.

"At last, when my stomach was crying for food, my father came, calling my name. I ran up to him and waited for him to speak, but he hit me on the back with his fist and said I had done a terrible thing. He had worked hard to send me to the Mission school, and he had sent me a little money each month so that I could buy things I needed, and now I wanted to throw it all away by seeing the *nkumbi*. He took me back to the house and locked me in, throwing me a little food that had been left over from the morning. It was cold and I could not eat it. I called for my mother, but she did not answer. I didn't know how many days I was kept there; I only remember thinking that I must truly still be a child because I cried so much, but I could not help it.

"What followed is so bad that I try to forget it, and I do not like to talk about it. One morning the Bwana Spence's motor car came and I was put into it and driven away. I still had not seen my mother, and although I saw Matungi and called to him from the window, he just turned away. If I had been a man, I would have jumped out, but I could not. I was sick. I was still being sick when we reached the Mission, and I no longer had the strength to lean out of the window. I was sick all over the back of the car. When Bwana Spence saw this, he was more angry than I had ever seen him. He had me taken away to the hospital, to cure my sickness.

"He came to see me later, and I told him that I wanted to see the *nkumbi* just as my father had seen it, that only in that way could I be a man. I told him all that Matungi had said, and he replied that Matungi was evil, and when he died would go to the fires that never go out. I told him about my

brothers, and how they were all glad that I was joining them, and how it was the first time I had really played with them. Bwana Spence asked me if I did not have enough friends at the Mission, and I said yes, but they were not my brothers—I wanted to be friends with *them,* and to see the *nkumbi* with them and share their blood, so that we could all live together as men-brothers, and go to the ancestors together. He told me that there was only one ancestor, and that was Bwana Yesu. I said that could not be, because Bwana Yesu was not married and did not have any children. I also told him that I thought Bwana Yesu was a lie invented to make us go to the white man's afterworld and be his servants there. I do not know what made me say this thing, because I *did* believe in Bwana Yesu; but I said it, and Bwana Spence said that I was also evil, but that it was Matungi's fault and not mine. He said he would ask Bwana Yesu to forgive me, and that he would not let me go home again for any more holidays. I could stay at the Mission and help keep the place clean. He stood at the end of my bed and asked Bwana Yesu to forgive me and to make me a good Christian again; then he left. As soon as he left I asked Bwana Yesu to forgive me and let me see the *nkumbi,* but I knew in my heart that he would listen to Bwana Spence and not me.

"The next day I was no longer sick, but they still would not let me out of the hospital. They said I was not there because I had been sick but for another reason, and I did not understand what they meant. They came in and took hold of me and made me walk into a special house they have where they bring people who are dying, and cut them open. I was very frightened and tried to break away, because I knew I was not dying and they had told me I was not even sick. I thought that Bwana Spence was so angry at me for making

his car dirty that he was going to kill me. He was there, in the house, and he smiled at me and said not to be frightened, that he had asked Bwana Yesu to stay with me, and that Bwana Yesu had told him how I wanted to be a man like other men, and had made him understand that this was right. At first I thought he meant that I was going to be allowed to return home to the *nkumbi,* but he said no, and told me to lie on the table. Only then did I begin to understand. I fought as hard as I could, but I could not get away. I remember Bwana Spence leaning on my arms, holding me down and smiling. But there was no love in his smile, only hate. Then someone put something over my face. It smelled of vomit and I thought I was being sick again. I felt all my life being taken away from me, and I was sure I was dying. The last thing I remember is Bwana Spence smiling. And then I died.

"When I woke up, I had no feeling. I knew there was a terrible pain in my body, but my mind was empty, and I just did not care about the pain. All I wanted was to *feel* again, to feel as though I was alive. But I could not. I saw the wife of Bwana Spence standing over me, but when she saw I recognized her, she turned away. I saw other people, but they did not mean anything to me. I heard noises, but I just wanted them to stop because they were empty noises. And then I knew I was dead. I knew it because the pain got worse, and as it got worse it no longer came from my whole body, it came from one place, the place where they had cut me with their knives. I could not see the cut, I could not see the blood, because I was covered with a sheet and I had no strength to move my hands to find what they had done. But I knew, because the pain came from my penis, where they had cut off my skin so that I would never be able to see the

nkumbi, and would never be able to be a man. I remember crying out loud—not because of the pain, but because of what they had done to me, and I was sick again.

* * *

". . . I now knew that I had truly died when they brought me into that house of the knife. I knew why Bwana Spence had not wanted to explain things, but tried to make us believe that the words of Bwana Yesu were good words and would help us to be good people. I knew now that his Bwana's kingdom really was in the clouds, although he said it was not, and that it was quite different from ours that is in the earth. I knew that in order to go to Bwana Yesu's kingdom I had to be white and uncircumcised, and that I could be neither. I also knew that my ancestors would not want me because I had not seen the *nkumbi.*

"I went to see Matungi, and he tried to make me strong. He said that even he did not understand all these matters. He had always thought that Bwana Yesu was a good man, and it was the Bwana Spence who was lying, because he knew of other white men who *were* circumcised. . . .

"Then I began to hate Bwana Spence because of all his lies, and because of all the unhappiness he had brought to my father and to Matungi and to myself. I felt he was the most evil thing I had ever met, and I asked Matungi to perform a special rite to make both my father and myself clean again in the eyes of our ancestors. But Matungi said he could do it for my father, but that I had not seen the *nkumbi,* and he did not know what he could do for me. He said that the ancestors were able to understand these things, and he would ask them to look after me, and maybe they would talk to him in a dream and tell him what to do.

Christianity became firmly established in Africa with the ordination of African priests.

"Meanwhile he told me that he thought the best thing was for me to go back to the Mission school and to continue with my learning. They would have to take me back after what they had done, he said. Matungi warned me to have nothing to do with Bwana Spence, not to trust a single white man there, not to believe a word they spoke, and never to join them in their ritual eating and drinking, because this might offend the ancestors even more. 'But,' he said, 'Learn

all you can. See for yourself if what Bwana Yesu says is the same thing as what the Bwana Spence says. You have been made one of Bwana Yesu's children by the water ceremony, and after all your father did not see in his dream whether the other children were circumcised or not. He thought they were too young—but maybe the Christians circumcise earlier than we do—and maybe Bwana Spence has an evil spirit in his body that makes him do and say these terrible things. If all that is so, and if you still believe in Bwana Yesu, you may go to his afterworld. You can not come to ours without seeing the *nkumbi.*'

"All this Matungi told me, and my father said that Matungi had spoken well. We would have to accept it that in the afterlife we would be separated forever, for my father had decided to go back to the ways of his ancestors.

"I went back to the school, and I am still there. I have learned a great deal, and I can now read the Big Book myself. But it does not always make sense, and it speaks of many things of which I still know nothing, and it is all about faraway places and about white men that can have nothing to do with me. I try to talk to Bwana Yesu but he does not talk back to me. I stop my ears when I hear Bwana Spence talking, because I do not want to be tricked by his lies. I look in his face and I know he is lying, and that he hates all of us. Even the young children know this and they laugh at him. I once thought of having a child by his daughter, thinking that in this way I might have access to the white man's afterworld, but Matungi told me this would be a very bad thing.

"I do not know what will happen. I am told that the white man is soon going to leave, and then my learning will be useful. But for what? What good is learning if I cannot marry a white girl and if none of our own girl-children will

have me? If I can not in any way make myself clean and acceptable in this world, how can I be fit for life in the afterworld?

"I met some BaNgwana [Muslims] the other day, and they told me that they have a god who will accept me and take me into his afterworld if I do certain things. But they are unclean things. . . . Perhaps I shall have no afterlife, and in that case I can only do what I can with this life. And in this life I shall never believe a white man again. If I follow his ways, it is with my body, not with my heart. In my heart there is only the knowledge that the white man has taken me away from my fathers and brothers for all time, and that he hates me. In that knowledge I can only find strength to hate back."

A Missionary Meets His Match *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Many Africans were not persuaded by the theological arguments of the Christian missionaries. In the following selection, for example, Akunna applies simple logic to decide that his Ibo God, Chukwu, is very much the same and every bit as "good" as Mr. Brown's Christian God.

This reading is taken from the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, one of Africa's most famous writers. Achebe, an Ibo, was formerly the Nigerian Minister for Broadcasting.

As you read this selection, think of this question:

How is Akunna's attitude toward God different from Mr. Brown's?]

Whenever Mr. Brown went to that village he spent long hours with Akunna in his *obi* talking through an interpreter about religion. Neither of them succeeded in converting the other but they learned more about their different beliefs.

* From *Things Fall Apart*, © 1959 by Chinua Achebe, reprinted by permission of Astor-Honor, Inc., New York, and William Heinemann Ltd.

"You say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth," said Akunna on one of Mr. Brown's visits. "We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods."

"There are no other gods," said Mr. Brown. "Chukwu is the only God and all others are false. You carve a piece of wood—like that one" (he pointed at the rafters from which Akunna's carved *Ikenga* hung), "and you call it a god. But it is still a piece of wood."

"Yes," said Akunna. "It is indeed a piece of wood. The tree from which it came was made by Chukwu, as indeed all minor gods were. But He made them for His messengers so that we could approach Him through them. It is like yourself. You are the head of your church."

"No," protested Mr. Brown. "The head of my church is God Himself."

"I know," said Akunna, "but there must be a head in this world among men. Somebody like yourself must be the head here."

"The head of my church in that sense is in England."

"That is exactly what I am saying. The head of your church is in your country. He has sent you here as his messenger. And you have also appointed your own messengers and servants. Or let me take another example, the District Commissioner. He is sent by your king."

"They have a queen," said the interpreter on his own account.

"Your queen sends her messenger, the District Commissioner. He finds that he cannot do the work alone and so he appoints *kotma* to help him. It is the same with God, or Chukwu. He appoints the smaller gods to help Him because His work is too great for one person."

"You should not think of him as a person," said Mr. Brown. "It is because you do so that you imagine He must need helpers. And the worst thing about it is that you give all the worship to the false gods you have created."

"That is not so. We make sacrifices to the little gods, but when they fail and there is no one else to turn to we go to Chukwu. It is right to do so. We approach a great man through his servants. But when his servants fail to help us, then we go to the last source of hope. We appear to pay greater attention to the little gods but that is not so. We worry them more because we are afraid to worry their Master. Our fathers knew that Chukwu was the Overlord and that is why many of them gave their children the name Chukwuka —'Chukwu is Supreme.' "

"You said one interesting thing," said Mr. Brown. "You are afraid of Chukwu. In my religion Chukwu is a loving Father and need not be feared by those who do His will."

"But we must fear Him when we are not doing His will," said Akunna. "And who is to tell His will? It is too great to be known."

Divine Dilemma *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Unlike Akunna in the last reading, most Ibos were converted to Christianity. But not all of them had the same depth of conviction, as you will see from the following selection, from the novel *Wand of Noble Wood,* by the Nigerian writer Onuora Nzekwu. The discussion here reveals a conflict between a husband and wife, Mbanefo and Bessie.

What is Mbanefo's chief complaint against the missionaries?]

"Chukwuemeka is no fool," [Mbanefo] answered. "I have always liked him for his display of commonsense and tact. I am sure he really meant what he told you. I wouldn't, however, advise you to take advantage of that. My advice is give him his due respect so that our ancestral spirits would not be angry with you."

"You speak as if you are no longer a Christian," I said, feigning surprise. "You don't mean to say you believe in the power of ancestral spirits?"

* Onuora Nzekwu, *Wand of Noble Wood,* London: Hutchinson, 1961, pp. 52-54.

"Of late, he has made it his hobby to attack the Church," Bessie put in quickly before he could say anything. "Why, I don't understand. He seems to forget that but for the missionaries he might have been a slave in some distant land. He forgets that the maternity home where he was born, the hospital where his wounds were treated, the school and the college education he received, were all provided by the Church. Recently, he has had some Jehovah Witnesses in every Sunday, and they are polluting his mind."

"You must understand," Mbanefo said, settling himself more comfortably in his seat, "that I do not deny any of the things she says the missionaries have done for us. These things are all on the material plane. I am only critical of their methods, which condemn everything traditional. Look at it from the spiritual angle. Did they try to study our religious heritage so as to find out if it contained any good things? No. Without trying to understand, they condemned our traditional way of life which saw our ancestors through the centuries. They called us savages and barbarians and tried to impose their own way of life on us. That was very wrong and made us suspicious of their intentions.

"But they buttressed their teachings with the material services which they rendered us. Apart from hospitals and schools, they made us presents of clothes and sometimes food. Thus they won not our spirits but our bodies; not a true belief in their teachings but our presence at their services.

"The result is that we have hidden our true selves, which occasionally come to the surface to remind them that their estimation of their achievements is only too wrong."

"Why don't you make your points to the right Church authorities?" I asked.

"I did when I was at college," he answered. "And what

did I get? Twelve strokes of the cane, and from a priest at that."

"Serves you right," his wife remarked.

"For some time now they have been after our children, who will be the fathers of tomorrow," he went on. "But still they haven't yet learned to reckon with the children's environment, which is the major influence in their lives. Beat the gong for a masquerades' display and you will have all the boys in the village square. Announce there is going to be a funeral and all the girls will come to dance. But ring the bell for evening service on Sunday and you'll be surprised at how few will come. Even those few come not because they are genuinely interested but through fear of being caned at school the next day.

"In recent years the accent has been on material wealth. The rich are flattered and coaxed into 'contributing toward the support of their pastors.' Their money, honestly or fraudulently come by, is most welcome. The poor are neglected and are not well cared for.

"Go among the grownups who profess Christianity. The moment they can afford it they become polygamists and take . . . traditional titles. When they think it will do them good they consult fortunetellers, make charms and wear them, and do a thousand and one other things which, to their tens of African priests, who themselves mimic their white brother clerics, are purely 'idolatrous and un-Christian.'

"Christianity is at heart; it is not the priest, the building, or the worship. Denominationalism is a deceit, and attendance at church is a matter of convenience. The fault with Christian missionaries is that they are blind to the good in our traditional religion. If they could only see [it] and introduce [it] into their system, Christianity would be less foreign

to us. Look at the Cherubim and Seraphim Society. Why, do you think, does it appeal to many of our people?"

"If you let him," his wife interrupted, "he'll talk like this the whole evening and never get tired. I am only sorry the priest did not give him many more strokes of the cane."

God and the Alarm Clock *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Christian missionaries often used the material products of Western technology to lure Africans to the church. But technology, of course, has nothing to do with religious truth, and some Africans recognized the dishonesty of associating the two. One such man was Prince Modupe, born in Guinea but a resident of the United States since 1922. The following selection is taken from his book *I Was a Savage,* a description of the author's boyhood in Africa.

Did Prince Modupe forsake Christianity? Why or why not?]

One day I was reading along in First Corinthians when none of the words seemed to make much sense or to be of special interest. The day was drowsily, dreamily hot. A fly buzzed around my head, distracting me. I was about to give up when a certain few words popped up at me as though they had been in larger print, in bolder ink. They seemed

* Prince Modupe, *I Was a Savage,* © 1957 by Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. and reprinted with their permission; reissued as *A Royal African,* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959.

tc have no connection in meaning to any of the words before or after them.

"There is one glory in the sun, and another glory in the moon, and another glory of the stars. . . ."

I stopped reading. I repeated the words over aloud to myself. Into my mind flashed the sight of my grandfather bending thoughtfully over the sundial he made by crisscrossing straws over a gourd. I saw him in my imagination as clearly as though my feet were in Dubricka. I saw every line in his good, kindly, noble face. I knew that he never looked at his homemade time device without feeling in his venerable bones the glory of the sun, that other glory of the moon, that further glory of the stars. He often spoke to me about these things. He meditated upon them.

Western technology and Christianity became intermingled and sometimes confused in the minds of many Africans.

A chill of excitement ran through me. I shivered with it as though in a fever chill, in spite of the heat of the day. *I had found my first clear answer to the confusions that deviled me!* THE GLORY OF GOD WAS NOT IN AN ALARM CLOCK! THE GLORY OF GOD WAS IN THE SUN AND THE MOON AND THE STARS! The Bible had carried God's mouth to me on that and I knew it for truth.

Perhaps I could have arrived at this sooner and with less mental anguish had not that first white man who came to Dubricka showed us mechanical gadgets as evidence of the power of God. Only one article in his "juju kit" was of spiritual import—the Bible. Every other thing with which he tried to impress and convert our people was not an artifact of his religion, but a representative item from his machine civilization. He had led us to believe that white nations had guns and steamships and skyscrapers and mirrors and matches, while the black tribes had none of these things, because the white God was more powerful. White men had accredited their own brilliant inventions to their God in an attempt to enhance God's power. As though God needed an alarm clock to be great! The greatness of God was in every stick and stone and star, just as we had been taught in the Bondo Bush. If God had a face, which seemed more improbable than ever now, that face bore more resemblance to my grandfather's when he felt the sun blessing his old bones than it did to the crafty visage of a spying policeman.

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Anglo-Saxon Destiny *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Many of the European colonists had no idea how profoundly they were disrupting the traditional cultures of Africa; they were simply insensitive to the beliefs and customs of other people. Others, however, intentionally tried to destroy African practices, in the conviction that European ways were superior. All of the missionaries and many of the other colonialists felt that they had a sacred duty to bring civilization to "backward" people; it was the "white man's burden" to do so.

The following demonstrates the cultural arrogance of many Europeans during the colonial period. The author, Josiah Strong, an American Congregational minister, felt that Anglo-Saxons (by which he means "the English, the British colonists, and the people of the United States") had a historic mission to bring "civil liberty" and spiritual Christianity to the rest of the world. He presented these ideas in his book *Our Country*, published in 1885.

As you read this selection, think of these questions:

Which of Strong's ideas persist today?

* Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, New York, 1885, as quoted in Louis Snyder, ed., *The Imperialism Reader*, Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1962, pp. 122-23; copyright © 1962, by Litton Educational Publishing, Inc.

How do Westerners generally regard people from the so-called underdeveloped world?]

Every race which has deeply impressed itself on the human family has been the representative of some great idea—one or more—which has given direction to the nation's life and form to its civilization. Among the Egyptians this . . . idea was life, among the Persians it was light, among the Hebrews it was purity, among the Greeks it was beauty, among the Romans it was law. The Anglo-Saxon is the representative of two great ideas, which are closely related. One of them is that of civil liberty. Nearly all of the civil liberty in the world is enjoyed by Anglo-Saxons: the English, the British

A royal party, consisting of the late King George VI of England, his wife, Queen Elizabeth, and his daughter, Princess Elizabeth (now Queen), inspects the colonies.

colonists, and the people of the United States. . . .

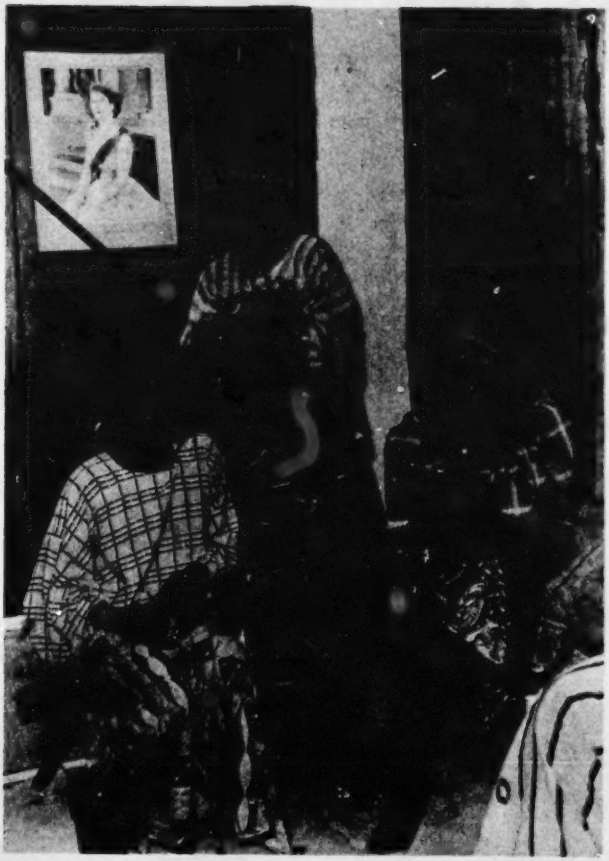
The other great idea . . . is that of a pure *spiritual* Christianity. . . . That means that most of the spiritual Christianity in the world is found among Anglo-Saxons and their converts; for this is the great missionary race. . . .

It follows, then, that the Anglo-Saxon, as the great representative of these two ideas, the depository of these two great blessings, sustains peculiar relations to the world's future, is divinely commissioned to be, in a peculiar sense, his brother's keeper. . . .

Another marked characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon is what may be called an instinct or genius for colonizing. His unequaled energy, his indomitable perseverence, and his personal independence made him a pioneer. He excels all others in pushing his way into new countries. It was those in whom this tendency was strongest that came to America, and this inherited tendency had been further developed by the westward sweep of successive generations across the continent. So noticeable has this characteristic become that English visitors remark it. Charles Dickens once said that the typical American would hesitate to enter heaven unless assured that he could go further west. . . .

It seems to me that God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world's future. . . .

Is there room for reasonable doubt that this race, unless devitalized by alcohol and tobacco, is destined to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others, and mold the remainder, until, in a very true and important sense, it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind? Already "the English language, saturated with Christian ideas, gathering up into itself the best thought of all the ages, is the great agent of Christian civili-



Delightfully unaware of Queen Elizabeth's photograph, these girls continue to arrange their hair in traditional African styles.

zation throughout the world; at this moment affecting the destinies and molding the character of half the human race." Jacob Grimm, the German philologist, said of this language: "It seems chosen, like its people, to rule in future times in still greater degree in all the corners of the earth." He pre-

dicted, indeed, that the language of Shakespeare would eventually become the language of mankind. Is not Tennyson's noble prophesy to find its fulfillment in Anglo-Saxondom's extending its dominion and influence—

> Till the war-drum throbs no longer,
> and the battle-flags are furl'd
>
> In the Parliament of man, the
> Federation of the world.

Houseboy *

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: What was it like for an African to work for Europeans? What kind of people were the colonialists? In the following selection, an African houseboy, Joseph (Toundi), gives us an inside view of the attitudes and morals of the Europeans from his "privileged" position as servant to the commandant of a French prison in the Cameroon.

Ferdinand Oyono, from whose novel *Houseboy* this selection is taken, is one of West Africa's finest writers. He is currently the Cameroon Ambassador to Liberia.

As you read this selection, think of these questions:

How closely do these Europeans follow the morality they preach to Africans?

The commandant likes Toundi, but his wife doesn't. Why not?]

At last it has happened. The Commandant has definitely taken me into his service. It was midnight, I had finished

* Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy*, translated by John Reed, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1966, pp. 24-26, 64-66, 90-92.

my work and was getting ready to go back to the location when the Commandant told me to follow him into his office. It was a terrible moment for me.

After he had looked at me for a long while, he asked me point-blank if I were a thief.

"No, Sir," I answered.

"Why aren't you a thief?"

"Because I do not want to go to hell."

He seemed taken aback by my answer. He tossed his head in disbelief.

"Where did you learn that?"

"I am a Christian, Sir," I told him, and proudly showed him the St. Christopher metal I wear round my neck.

"So, you are not a thief because you don't want to go to hell?"

"Yes, Sir."

"What is it like, hell?"

"Well, Sir, it is flames and snakes and the Devil with horns. There is a picture of hell in my prayer book . . . I . . . I . . . can show it to you."

I was going to pull the little prayer book out of the back pocket of my shorts but the Commandant made a sign to stop me. He watched me for a minute through the wreaths of smoke he was puffing into my face. He sat down. I bowed my head. I could feel his eyes on me. He crossed his legs and uncrossed them. He signalled me to a chair opposite to him. He leaned toward me and lifted up my chin. He gazed into my eyes and went on.

"Good, good, Joseph, we shall be friends."

"Yes, Sir. Thank you, Sir."

"But if you steal, I shan't wait till you go to hell. It's too far. . . ."

"Yes, Sir. It's . . . Where is it, Sir?"

I had never asked myself the question. My master was amused to see my puzzlement. He shrugged and leaned against the back of his chair.

"So you don't know where this hell is where you're afraid you'll go and burn?"

"It's next to Purgatory, Sir. It's . . . It's . . . in the sky."

My master smothered a laugh. Then, serious again, he pierced me with his panther eyes.

"Well done! There we are, then. I think you see why I can't wait till 'small Joseph go burn in hell'."

The Commandant imitated the pidgin used by native soldiers. He put on a strange voice. I thought he was very funny. I coughed hard so as not to laugh. He went on, not noticing.

"If you steal from me I shall skin you alive."

"Yes, Sir. I know, Sir. I didn't say that just now, Sir, because I took that for granted, Sir. . . ."

"All right, all right," said the Commandant, impatiently.

He got up and began to walk round me.

"You're a clean lad," he said, looking me over carefully. "No jiggers. Your shirt is clean. No scabies."

He stepped back and looked me up and down again.

"You're intelligent. The priests speak very well of you. So I can count on little Joseph, eh?"

"Yes, Sir," I said. My eyes shone with pleasure and pride.

"You may go. Be here every morning at six o'clock. You understand?"

When I was outside on the veranda I felt I had just come through a hard battle. The end of my nose was perspiring.

My master is thickset. His legs have great muscles like the legs of a pedlar. He is the kind of man we call "mahogany-trunk" because the trunk of the mahogany tree is so strong

that it never bends in a storm. I am not a storm. I am the thing that obeys.

* * *

Madame was swinging in a hammock with a book in her hand.

While I was bringing her something to drink she asked me:

"Boy, why don't you like working at the Residence?"

I stood disconcerted, my mouth open. She went on:

"You look as if you find it a drudgery. Oh, of course we are very satisfied with you. . . . You have no faults, you are always punctual, you are a consicentious worker . . . but you haven't got that joy one finds in African workers. . . . You give the impression that you are doing a houseboy's job while waiting for something else to come along."

Madame spoke without a pause, looking straight ahead. She turned toward me.

"What does your father do?"

"He is dead."

"I'm sorry. . . ."

"Madame is very kind."

After a pause she went on:

"What did he do when he was alive?"

"He set porcupine traps."

"How funny." She laughed. "And can you set porcupine traps as well?"

"Yes, Madame."

She swayed back and forth in the hammock and tapped the ash from the cigarette she was contentedly puffing. She blew smoke out of her mouth and nose into the space that separated us. She picked off a tiny piece of paper stuck to her lower lip and blew it toward me.

"You see," she went on, "you've already got as far as being the Commandant's houseboy."

She gave me a smile which curled her upper lip. Her eyes gleamed. They seemed to be trying to make some discovery in my face. To cover up, she emptied her glass and said:

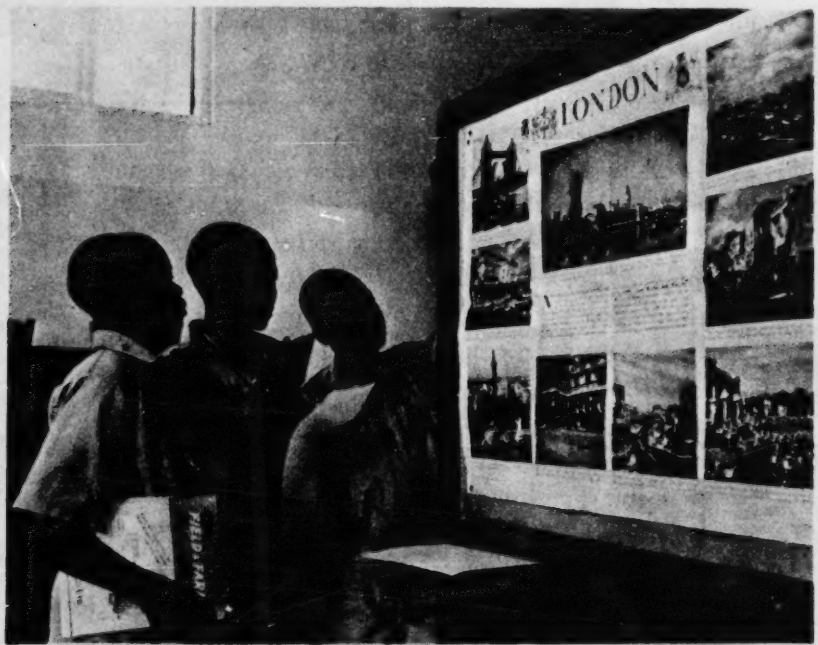
"Are you married?"

"No, Madame."

"Yet you earn enough to be able to buy a wife. . . . Robert says that as the Commandant's houseboy you would be a good match. . . . You must start a family."

She smiled.

"A family, a big family, eh?"



New dreams were planted in the minds of young Africans by European educators.

"Perhaps, Madame, but my wife and children will never be able to eat and dress like Madame or like white children."

"Oh, dear," she laughed, "you are getting big ideas."

She went on. "You must be serious. Everyone has their position in life. You are a houseboy, my husband is Commandant . . . nothing can be done about it. You are a Christian, aren't you?"

"Yes, Madame, more or less."

"What do you mean, 'more or less'?"

"Not very Christian, Madame. Christian because the priest poured water on my head and gave me a European name."

"I can hardly credit what you are telling me now. The Commandant told me you were a very firm believer."

"We have to believe the white man's stories—more or less."

"So that's the way it is, is it?"

I had taken her breath away.

"But," she went on, "don't you believe in God any more? Have you gone back to being a pagan?"

"The river does not go back to its spring . . . I think there is a proverb like that in Madame's country too."

"Yes, indeed. . . . Well, it's all very interesting," she said, amused. "Now get my shower ready. How hot it gets!"

* * *

My master is off into the bush again this morning. He is indefatigable. I am frightened. It makes things very awkward for me. While he was here I had some security. What has Madame got up her sleeve? She says nothing. She won't even call me by name. She just signals. She signalled me to come this morning when she gave me the letter. I had to take it to her lover as soon as her husband had gone.

The prison-director was busy with two Africans suspected of stealing from M. Janopoulos. He was "teaching them how to behave."

With the help of a constable he was giving them a flogging in front of M. Janopoulos. They were stripped to the waist and handcuffed. There was a rope round their necks, tied to the pole in the Flogging Yard, so that they couldn't turn their necks toward the blows.

It was terrible. The hippopotamus-hide whip tore up their flesh. Every time they groaned it went through my bowels. M. Moreau with his hair down over his face and his shirt sleeves rolled up was setting about them so violently that I wondered, in agony of mind, if they would come out of it alive. Chewing on his cigar, M. Janopoulos released his dog. It mouthed about the heels of the prisoners and tore at their trousers.

"Confess, you thieves," shouted M. Moreau. "Give them the butt of your rifle, Ndjangoula."

The huge Sara ran up, presented his weapon, and brought down the butt on the suspects.

"Not on the head, Ndjangoula, they've got hard heads. In the kidneys."

Janopoulos was laughing. M. Moreau panted for breath. The prisoners had lost consciousness.

M. Moreau is right, we must have hard heads. When Ndjangoula brought down his rifle butt the first time, I thought their skulls would shatter. I could not hold myself from shaking as I watched. It was terrible. I thought of all the priests, all the pastors, all the white men, who come to save our souls and preach love of our neighbors. Is the white man's neighbor only other white men? Who can go on be-

lieving the stuff we are served up in the churches when things happen like I saw today. . . .

It will be the usual thing. M. Moreau's suspects will be sent to the "Blackman's Grave" where they will spend a few days painfully dying. Then they will be buried naked in the prisoners' cemetery. On Sunday, the priest will say, "Dearly beloved brethren, pray for all those prisoners who die without making their peace with God." M. Moreau will present his upturned topee to the faithful. Everyone will put in a little more than he had intended. All the money goes to the whites. They are always thinking up new ways to get back what little money they pay us.

How wretched we are.

I cannot remember what I did when I got back to the Residence, I was so upset by what I had seen. There are some things it is better never to see. Once you have seen them, you can never stop living through them over and over again.

I don't think I shall ever forget what I have seen. I shall never forget that guttural, inhuman cry from the smaller of the two suspects when Ndjangoula brought the butt down on him with such force that even M. Moreau swore under his breath and M. Janopoulos dropped his cigar. The whites went off, shrugging and gesticulating. M. Moreau turned round suddenly and beckoned to me. He grabbed me by the shoulder. Janopoulos exchanged glances with him. I could feel his hand through my jersey, burning and damp. When we were out of sight of M. Janopoulos, M. Moreau took his hand from my shoulder and began to feel in his pockets. He offered me a cigarette and lit up himself.

"Don't you smoke?" he said, offering me a light.

"Not in the daytime," I said, not knowing what to say.

He shrugged and took a long draw at his cigarette.

"Tell Madame I'll be over at . . . let me see" (he looked at his watch) "um . . . um . . . I'll be over at three o'clock. All right?"

"Yes, Sir, yes, Sir," I said.

He held me by the back of my neck and made me look at him. The cigarette I had put behind my ear fell down. I tried to bend down and pick it up so I would not have to look at him. He put his foot on the cigarette and I felt his fingers tighten on my neck.

"No tricks with me, eh?" he said, under his breath, forcing me to stand upright.

"Listen, my lad," he said, "those chaps in there . . . they know me . . . See?" He pointed his thumb over his shoulder towards the prison. Then he smiled and tossed me the packet of cigarettes. His movement was so unexpected that I missed my catch. The packet flew over my head.

"Pick it up . . . it's for you," he said, laughing. "You play along with me, you get things given you. You're a friend of mine, aren't you?"

"Yes, Sir," I heard myself say.

* * *

"He's a funny chap, your boy," said M. Moreau as I was going away.

"He's Mon-sieur Toun-di," said Madame stressing each syllable.

"How long has he been with you?" asked M. Moreau.

"Robert took him on," said Madame. "It seems he was Father Gilbert's boy. Father Gilbert's successor spoke very well of him. . . . He rather fancies himself. He has ideas about his own importance. Just lately he has been taking liberties. But he knows now how far he can go."

M. Moreau raised himself and stubbed out his cigarette in the ashtray. While Madame was talking he rolled his eyes, opened them wide, shut them, and opened them again with great sweeps of his eyebrows. He gave me a dangerous look. A lock of hair hanging down over his forehead trembled. He rubbed his hands and leaned toward Madame. At the same time he kept his eyes on me.

"Come here," said the prison-director, beckoning me. Then he said to Madame, "You see, he can't look us in the eye. His eyes are shifty like a pygmy's. He's dangerous. Natives are like that. When they can't look you in the eye, it's a sure sign they've got some idea fixed in their wooden heads. . . ."

He grabbed me by the neck and forced me to look at him. I did not resist. He turned his head and said to Madame:

"That's funny. You'd better get rid of him. I'll find you someone else. The place for this one is with me . . . at *Bekon* [the prison]," he added, using the word in my own language.

"Robert is attached to him," said Madame, "though I don't know what he sees in him. . . . I've asked him several times to sack him but you know how obstinate Robert is. . . ."

So I was still at the Residence because of the Commandant. I was right to be frightened when he was away.

"It's no good pretending to be putting away the china," said Madame, raising her voice. "Open a bottle of Perrier and then leave us alone, Monsieur Toundi."

I brought the bottle of fizzing water.

"Will Madame be wanting anything else?" I asked.

"No," she said impatiently.

I bowed and backed out of the room. When I was beneath the veranda I heard the door shut and the key turn in the lock.

"Is There Anybody Here?" and Martyr

[EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Perhaps the most devastating aspect of colonialism was the way Europeans treated Africans. It is one thing to lose your land and your political power, but it is quite another to lose your dignity as a man. Europeans simply did not recognize Africans as human beings and as a result lost their own claim to humanness.

"Is There Anybody Here?" illustrates the dehumanizing effects of colonialism in Africa. It was written by Tom Mboya and taken from his book, *Freedom and After*. Until his death by an assassin's bullet in July, 1969, Mboya was one of the most promising leaders in Africa. He was Kenya's Minister of Finance.

The poem "Martyr" tells the whole story of colonialism in a few lines. The author, David Diop, one of West Africa's best-known poets, was killed in a plane crash in 1960, at the age of thirty-three.]

"IS THERE ANYBODY HERE?"*

Working as a sanitary inspector for the Nairobi City Council brought me face to face with racial prejudice in a way I had not known before.

One day in 1951, when one of my European colleagues was away on leave, I was working alone in the food section of the Health Department, testing milk samples. European dairy farmers had to come to us for licenses to bring their milk into Nairobi for sale, and our job was to see that the milk was free of disease and conformed to certain standards. I was in the laboratory busy with some tests when a European woman came in with a sample bottle of milk. She looked around for a few moments and did not say anything.

"Good morning, madame," I said.

When I spoke, she turned round and asked, "Is there anybody here?"

I was a bit shocked and angry, but decided her question was amusing. So I asked, "Is there something wrong with your eyes?"

She was furious and rushed away to find the mayor and the chief sanitary inspector. I had been cheeky and disrespectful, she complained, and the next day she brought a petition she had persuaded other farmers to sign saying they did not want to deal with an African and wanted a European inspector instead. The chief sanitary inspector told the woman she would have to deal with an African if she wanted

* Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1963, pp. 21-22. Copyright © 1963 by Tom Mboya. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co. and David Higham Associates Ltd.

her license, and the mayor took no action on the petition. He came to me later and said I should not mind these reactions, which were to be expected.

The presence of Europeans in Africa led to racial discrimination, as indicated by these signs in South Africa. Notice that whites are called "ladies" and "gentlemen," but Africans are simply called "women" and "men."

But there were a good many other racial incidents. I was put under a European inspector to gain experience, and the two of us went around Nairobi together several times in the course of our work. I was surprised to find that from time to time he expected me to sit in the car when he went to inspect premises. I refused to do this and we had some heated words. He drove back to City Hall and said we could never work together again.

A number of times I was thrown out of premises I had

gone to inspect by Europeans who insisted they wanted a European, not an African, to do the job. The City Council had to prosecute some of them for obstructing African inspectors in the course of their duties. But even inside the department there was discrimination. African inspectors were paid only one fifth of the salary which a European inspector received for doing the same job. African inspectors were told to do their work in khaki uniforms, while the Europeans wore lounge suits. I objected and said either we should all wear uniforms or should all be free to wear what we liked. . . .

MARTYR*

The White Man killed my father,
My father was proud.
The White Man seduced my mother,
My mother was beautiful.
The White Man burnt my brother
beneath the noonday sun.
My brother was strong.
His hands red with black blood
The White Man turned to me;
And in the Conqueror's voice said,
"Boy! a chair, a napkin, a drink."

* David Diop, from Olumbe Bassir, ed., *An Anthology of West African Verse*, Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1957, p. 53. Translated by Olumbe Bassir.